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# *Collected Shorter Poems*

by W. H. Auden

★

POEMS
*including* THE ORATORS
*and* THE DANCE OF DEATH

ANOTHER TIME

THE DOUBLE MAN

ON THIS ISLAND

JOURNEY TO A WAR
(*with Christopher Isherwood*)

ASCENT OF F-6
(*with Christopher Isherwood*)

THE DOG BENEATH THE SKIN
(*with Christopher Isherwood*)

ON THE FRONTIER
(*with Christopher Isherwood*)

LETTERS FROM ICELAND
(*with Louis MacNeice*)

FOR THE TIME BEING
'*For the Time Being*'—*a Christmas Oratorio* and '*The Sea and the Mirror—a Commentary on Shakespeare's The Tempest*'

# COLLECTED
# SHORTER POEMS
## 1930-1944

by

W. H. AUDEN

FABER AND FABER LTD
24 Russell Square
London

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To
Christopher Isherwood
and
Chester Kallman

Whether conditioned by God or their neutral structure, still
All men have this common creed, account for it as you will:—
The Truth is one and incapable of contradiction;
All knowledge that conflicts with itself is Poetic Fiction.

# *Preface*

IN the eyes of every author, I fancy, his own past work falls into four classes. First, the pure rubbish which he regrets ever having conceived; second—for him the most painful—the good ideas which his incompetence or impatience prevented from coming to much (*The Orators* seems to me such a case of the fair notion fatally injured); third, the pieces he has nothing against except their lack of importance; these must inevitably form the bulk of any collection since, were he to limit it to the fourth class alone, to those poems for which he is honestly grateful, his volume would be too depressingly slim.

W.H.A.

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# PART ONE

★

## *Poems*

## *Musée des Beaux Arts*

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just
walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the
torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Brueghel's *Icarus*, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

## *In War Time**

*(For Caroline Newton)*

Abruptly mounting her ramshackle wheel,
Fortune has pedalled furiously away;
The sobbing mess is on our hands today.

* The poems marked by asterisks are published for the first time in book form.

Those accidental terrors, Famine, Flood,
Were never trained to diagnose or heal
Nightmares that are intentional and real.

Nor lust nor gravity can preach an aim
To minds disordered by a lucid dread
Of seeking peace by going off one's head.

Nor will the living waters whistle; though
Diviners cut their throats to prove their claim,
The desert remains arid all the same.

If augurs take up flying to fulfil
The doom they prophesy, it must be so;
The herons have no modern sign for No.

If nothing can upset but total war
The massive fancy of the heathen will
That solitude is something you can kill,

If we are right to choose our suffering
And be tormented by an Either-Or,
The right to fail that is worth dying for,

If so, the sweets of victory are rum:
A pride of earthly cities premising
The Inner Life as socially the thing,

Where, even to the lawyers, Law is what,
For better or for worse, our vows become
When no one whom we need is looking, Home

A sort of honour, not a building site,
Wherever we are, when, if we chose, we might
Be somewhere else, yet trust that we have
chosen right.

## *Never Stronger*

Again in conversations
Speaking of fear
And throwing off reserve
The voice is nearer
But no clearer
Than first love
Than boys' imaginations.

For every news
Means pairing off in twos and twos,
Another I, another You,
Each knowing what to do
But of no use.

Never stronger
But younger and younger,
Saying good-bye but coming back, for fear
Is over there
And the centre of anger
Is out of danger.

## *The Composer*

All the others translate: the painter sketches
A visible world to love or reject;
Rummaging into his living, the poet fetches
The images out that hurt and connect.

From Life to Art by painstaking adaption,
Relying on us to cover the rift;
Only your notes are pure contraption,
Only your song is an absolute gift.

Pour out your presence, O delight, cascading
The falls of the knee and the weirs of the spine,
Our climate of silence and doubt invading;

You alone, alone, O imaginary song,
Are unable to say an existence is wrong,
And pour out your forgiveness like a wine.

## *Voltaire at Ferney*

Almost happy now, he looked at his estate.
An exile making watches glanced up as he passed,
And went on working; where a hospital was rising fast
A joiner touched his cap; an agent came to tell
Some of the trees he'd planned were progressing well.
The white alps glittered. It was summer. He was very great.

Far off in Paris, where his enemies
Whispered that he was wicked, in an upright chair
A blind old woman longed for death and letters. He would write
'Nothing is better than life'. But was it? Yes, the fight
Against the false and the unfair
Was always worth it. So was gardening. Civilize.

Cajoling, scolding, scheming, cleverest of them all,
He'd led the other children in a holy war
Against the infamous grown-ups; and, like a child, been sly
And humble when there was occasion for
The two-faced answer or the plain protective lie,
But patient like a peasant waited for their fall.

And never doubted, like D'Alembert, he would win:
Only Pascal was a great enemy, the rest
Were rats already poisoned; there was much, though, to be done,

And only himself to count upon.
Dear Diderot was dull but did his best;
Rousseau, he'd always known, would blubber and give in.

So, like a sentinel, he could not sleep. The night was full
of wrong,
Earthquakes and executions. Soon he would be dead,
And still all over Europe stood the horrible nurses
Itching to boil their children. Only his verses
Perhaps could stop them: He must go on working. Overhead
The uncomplaining stars composed their lucid song.

## *Journey to Iceland*

And the traveller hopes: 'Let me be far from any
Physician'; and the ports have names for the sea,
The citiless, the corroding, the sorrow;
And North means to all: 'Reject.'

And the great plains are forever where the cold fish is hunted,
And everywhere; the light birds flicker and flaunt;
Under the scolding flag the lover
Of islands may see at last,

Faintly, his limited hope, as he nears the glitter
Of glaciers, the sterile immature mountains intense
In the abnormal day of this world, and a river's
Fan-like polyp of sand.

Then let the good citizen here find natural marvels:
A horse-shoe ravine, an issue of steam from a cleft
In the rock, and rocks, and waterfalls brushing the
Rocks, and among the rocks birds.

And the student of prose and conduct places to visit:
The site of a church where a bishop was put in a bag,
  The bath of a great historian, the fort where
  An outlaw dreaded the dark;

Remember the doomed man thrown by his horse and crying,
'Beautiful is the hillside, I will not go,'
  The old woman confessing, 'He that I loved the
  Best, to him I was worst'.

For Europe is absent: this is an island and therefore
A refuge, where the fast affections of its dead may be bought
  By those whose dreams accuse them of being
  Spitefully alive, and the pale

From too much passion of kissing feel pure in its deserts.
Can they? For the world is, and the present, and the lie.
  The narrow bridge over the torrent,
  And the small farm under the crag

Are the natural setting for the jealousies of a province;
And the weak vow of fidelity is formed by the cairn;
  And within the indigenous figure on horseback
  On the bridle path down by the lake

The blood moves also by crooked and furtive inches,
Asks all our questions: 'Where is the homage? When
  Shall justice be done? O who is against me?
  Why am I always alone?'

No, our time has no favourite suburb; no local features
Are those of the young for whom all wish to care;
  The promise is only a promise, the fabulous
  Country impartially far.

Tears fall in all the rivers. Again the driver
Pulls on his gloves and in a blinding snowstorm starts
Upon his deadly journey, and again the writer
Runs howling to his art.

## *Gare du Midi*

A nondescript express in from the South,
Crowds round the ticket barrier, a face
To welcome which the mayor has not contrived
Bugles or braid: something about the mouth
Distracts the stray look with alarm and pity.
Snow is falling. Clutching a little case,
He walks out briskly to infect a city
Whose terrible future may have just arrived.

## *Kairos and Logos**

### I

Around them boomed the rhetoric of time,
The smells and furniture of the known world
Where conscience worshipped an aesthetic order
And what was unsuccessful was condemned;
And, at the centre of its vast self-love,
The emperor and his pleasures, dreading death.

In lovely verse that military order,
Transferring its obsession onto time
Besieged the body and cuckolded love;
Puzzling the boys of an athletic world,
These only feared another kind of Death
To which the time-obsessed are all condemned.

Night and the rivers sang a chthonic love,
Destroyer of cities and the daylight order,
But seemed to them weak arguments for death;
The apple tree that cannot measure time
Might taste the apple yet not be condemned;
They, to enjoy it, must renounce the world.

Friendly to what the sensual call death,
Placing their lives below the dogs who love
Their fallen masters and are not condemned,
They came to life within a dying order;
Outside the sunshine of its civil world
The savage waited their appointed time.

Its brilliant self-assertions were condemned
To interest the forest and draw death
On aqueducts and learning; yet the world,
Through them, had witnessed, when predestined love
Fell like a daring meteor into time,
The condescension of eternal order.

So, sown in little clumps about the world,
The fair, the faithful and the uncondemned
Broke out spontaneously all over time,
Setting against the random facts of death
A ground and possibility of order,
Against defeat the certainty of love.

And never, like its own, condemned the world
Or hated time, but sang until their death:
'O Thou who lovest, set its love in order.'

## II

Quite suddenly her dream became a word:
There stood the unicorn, declaring—'Child';
She kissed her dolls good-bye and one by one
Embraced the faithful roses in the garden,
Waved for the last time to her mother's home,
And tiptoed out into the silent forest.

And seemed the lucky, the predestined one
For whom the stones made way without a word;
And sparrows fought to make her feel at home,
And winds restrained their storms before the child;
And all the children of that mother-forest
Were told to let her treat it as her garden.

Till she forgot that she was not at home
Where she was loved, of course, by everyone,
Could always tell the rose-bush—'Be a forest'.
Or make dolls guess when she had thought a word,
Or play at being Mother in the garden
And have importance as her only child.

So, scampering like a sparrow through the forest,
She piled up stones, pretending they were Home,
Called the wild roses that she picked 'My Garden',
Made any wind she chose the Naughty One,
Talked to herself as to a doll, a child
Whose mother-magic knew the Magic Word.

And took the earth for granted as her garden:
Till the day came the children of the forest
Ceased to regard or treat her as a child;
The roses frowned at her untidy home,
The sparrows laughed when she misspelt a word,
Winds cried: 'A mother should behave like one.'

Frightened and cruel like a guilty child,
She shouted all the roses from her garden,
And threw stones at the winds: without a word
The unicorn slipped off into the forest
Like an offended doll, and one by one
The sparrows flew back to her mother's home.

Of course the forest overran her garden,
Yet, though, like everyone, she lost her home,
The Word still nursed Its motherhood, Its child.

## III

If one could name the father of these things,
They would not happen to decide one's fate:
He woke one morning and the verbal truth
He went to bed with was no longer there;
The years of reading fell away; his eyes
Beheld the weights and contours of the earth.

One must be passive to conceive the truth:
The bright and brutal surfaces of things
Awaited the decision of his eyes,
These pretty girls, to be embraced by fate
And mother all the objects of the earth;
The fatherhood of knowledge stood out there.

One notices, if one will trust one's eyes,
The shadow cast by language upon truth:
He saw his rôle as father to an earth
Whose speechless, separate, and ambiguous things
Married at his decision; he was there
To show a lucid passion for their fate.

One has good reason to award the earth
The dog-like dumb devotion of the eyes;
Death, love, dishonour are predicted there,

Her arbitrary moments are the truth:
No, he was not the father of his fate;
The power of decision lay with things.

To know, one must decide what is not there,
Where sickness is, and nothing: all that earth
Presented was a challenge to his fate
To father dreams of talking oaks, of eyes
In walls, catastrophes, sins, poems, things
Whose possibilities excluded truth.

What one expects is not, of course, one's fate:
When he had finished looking at them, there
Were helpless images instead of things
That had looked so decided; instead of earth
His fatherless creation; instead of truth
The luckiest convention of his eyes:

That saw himself there with an exile's eyes,
Missing his Father, a thing of earth
On whose decision hung the fate of truth.

## IV

Castle and crown are faded clean away,
The fountain sinks into a level silence;
What kingdom can be reached by the occasions
That climb the broken ladders of our lives?
We are imprisoned in unbounded spaces,
Defined by an indefinite confusion.

We should have wept before for these occasions,
We should have given what is snatched away;
O columns, acrobats of cheering spaces,

O songs that were the royal wives of silence,
Now you are art and part of our confusion;
We are at loggerheads with our own lives.

The order of the macrocosmic spaces,
The outward calm of their remote occasions,
Has lost all interest in our confusion;
Our inner regimen has given way;
The subatomic gulfs confront our lives
With the cold stare of their eternal silence.

Where are the kings who routed all confusion,
The bearded gods who shepherded the spaces,
The merchants who poured gold into our lives?
Where the historic routes, the great occasions?
Laurel and language wither into silence;
The nymphs and oracles have fled away.

And cold and absence echo on our lives:
'We are your conscience of your own confusion
That made a stricken widow of the silence
And weeping orphans of the unarmed spaces,
That laid time waste behind you, stole away
The birthright of innumerable occasions.'

O blessing of reproach. O proof that silence
And condemnation presuppose our lives:
We are not lost but only run away,
The authors and the powers of confusion;
We are the promise of unborn occasions;
Our presence is required by all the spaces.

The flora of our lives could guide occasions
Without confusion on their frisking way
Through all the silences and all the spaces.

## *Who's Who*

A shilling life will give you all the facts:
How Father beat him, how he ran away,
What were the struggles of his youth, what acts
Made him the greatest figure of his day:
Of how he fought, fished, hunted, worked all night,
Though giddy, climbed new mountains; named a sea:
Some of the last researchers even write
Love made him weep pints like you and me.

With all his honours on, he sighed for one
Who, say astonished critics, lived at home;
Did little jobs about the house with skill
And nothing else; could whistle; would sit still
Or potter round the garden; answered some
Of his long marvellous letters but kept none.

## *His Excellency*

As it is, plenty;
As it's admitted
The children happy
And the car, the car
That goes so far,
And the wife devoted:
To this as it is,
To the work and the banks
Let his thinning hair
And his hauteur
Give thanks, give thanks.

All that was thought
As like as not is not;
When nothing was enough
But love, but love,
And the rough future
Of an intransigeant nature,
And the betraying smile,
Betraying, but a smile:
That that is not, is not;
Forget, forget.

Let him not cease to praise,
Then, his spacious days;
Yes, and the success
Let him bless, let him bless:
Let him see in this
The profit larger
And the sin venial,
Lest he see as it is
The loss as major
And final, final.

## *Birthday Poem*

(*To Christopher Isherwood*)

August for the people and their favourite islands.
Daily the steamers sidle up to meet
The effusive welcome of the pier, and soon
The luxuriant life of the steep stone valleys,
The sallow oval faces of the city
Begot in passion or good-natured habit,
Are caught by waiting coaches, or laid bare
Beside the undiscriminating sea.

Lulled by the light they live their dreams of freedom;
May climb the old road twisting to the moors,
Play leap frog, enter cafés, wear
The tigerish blazer and the dove-like shoe.
The yachts upon the little lake are theirs,
The gulls ask for them, and to them the band
Makes its tremendous statements; they control
The complicated apparatus of amusement.

All types that can intrigue the writer's fancy,
Or sensuality approves, are here.
And I, each meal-time with the families,
The animal brother and his serious sister,
Or after breakfast on the urned steps watching
The defeated and disfigured marching by,
Have thought of you, Christopher, and wished beside me
Your squat spruce body and enormous head.

Nine years ago, upon that southern island
Where the wild Tennyson became a fossil,
Half-boys, we spoke of books and praised
The acid and austere, behind us only
The stuccoed suburb and expensive school.
Scented our turf, the distant baying
Nice decoration to the artist's wish;
Yet fast the deer was flying through the wood.

Our hopes were set still on the spies' career,
Prizing the glasses and the old felt hat,
And all the secrets we discovered were
Extraordinary and false; for this one coughed
And it was gasworks coke, and that one laughed
And it was snow in bedrooms; many wore wigs,
The coastguard signalled messages of love,
The enemy were sighted from the Norman tower.

Five summers pass and now we watch
The Baltic from a balcony: the word is love.
Surely one fearless kiss would cure
The million fevers, a stroking brush
The insensitive refuse from the burning core.
Was there a dragon who had closed the works
While the starved city fed it with the Jews?
Then love would tame it with his trainer's look.

Pardon the studied taste that could refuse
The golf-house quick one and the rector's tea;
Pardon the nerves the thrushes could not soothe,
Yet answered promptly the no-subtler lure
To private joking in a panelled room,
The solitary vitality of tramps and madmen;
Believed the whisper in the double bed:
Pardon for these and every flabby fancy.

For now the moulding images of growth
That made our interest and us, are gone.
Louder to-day the wireless roars
Warnings and lies, and it is little comfort
Among the well-shaped cosily to flit,
Or longer to desire about our lives
The beautiful loneliness of the banks, or find
The stoves and resignations of the frozen plains.

The close-set eyes of mother's boy
Saw nothing to be done; we look again:
See Scandal praying with her sharp knees up,
And Virtue stood at Weeping Cross,
The green thumb to the ledger knuckled down,
And Courage to his leaking ship appointed,
Slim Truth dismissed without a character,
And gaga Falsehood highly recommended.

Greed showing shamelessly her naked money,
And all Love's wondering eloquence debased
To a collector's slang, Smartness in furs,
And Beauty scratching miserably for food,
Honour self-sacrificed for Calculation,
And Reason stoned by Mediocrity,
Freedom by Power shockingly maltreated,
And Justice exiled till Saint Geoffrey's Day.

So in this hour of crisis and dismay,
What better than your strict and adult pen
Can warn us from the colours and the consolations,
The showy arid works, reveal
The squalid shadow of academy and garden,
Make action urgent and its nature clear?
Who give us nearer insight to resist
The expanding fear, the savaging disaster?

This then my birthday wish for you, as now
From the narrow window of my fourth floor room
I smoke into the night, and watch reflections
Stretch in the harbour. In the houses
The little pianos are closed, and a clock strikes.
And all sway forward on the dangerous flood
Of history, that never sleeps or dies,
And, held one moment, burns the hand.

## *Macao*

A weed from Catholic Europe, it took root
Between the yellow mountains and the sea,
And bore these gay stone houses like a fruit,
And grew on China imperceptibly.

Rococo images of Saint and Saviour
Promise her gamblers fortunes when they die;
Churches beside the brothels testify
That faith can pardon natural behaviour.

This city of indulgence need not fear
The major sins by which the heart is killed,
And governments and men are torn to pieces:

Religious clocks will strike; the childish vices
Will safeguard the low virtues of the child;
And nothing serious can happen here.

## *This One*

Before this loved one
Was that one and that one
A family
And history
And ghost's adversity
Whose pleasing name
Was neighbourly shame.
Before this last one
Was much to be done,
Frontiers to cross
As clothes grew worse
And coins to pass
In a cheaper house
Before this last one
Before this loved one.

Face that the sun
Is supple on
May stir but here
Is no new year;

This gratitude for gifts is less
Than the old loss;
Touching is shaking hands
On mortgaged lands;
And smiling of
This gracious greeting
'Good day. Good luck'
Is no real meeting
But instinctive look
A backward love.

## *Atlantis**

Being set on the idea
  Of getting to Atlantis,
You have discovered of course
  Only the Ship of Fools is
Making the voyage this year,
As gales of abnormal force
  Are predicted, and that you
  Must therefore be ready to
Behave absurdly enough
  To pass for one of The Boys,
At least appearing to love
  Hard liquor, horseplay and noise.

Should storms, as may well happen,
  Drive you to anchor a week
In some old harbour-city
  Of Ionia, then speak
With her witty scholars, men
Who have proved there cannot be
  Such a place as Atlantis:
  Learn their logic, but notice

How its subtlety betrays
  Their enormous simple grief;
Thus they shall teach you the ways
  To doubt that you may believe.

If, later, you run aground
  Among the headlands of Thrace,
Where with torches all night long
  A naked barbaric race
Leaps frenziedly to the sound
Of conch and dissonant gong;
  On that stony savage shore
  Strip off your clothes and dance, for
Unless you are capable
  Of forgetting completely
About Atlantis, you will
  Never finish your journey.

Again, should you come to gay
  Carthage or Corinth, take part
In their endless gaiety;
  And if in some bar a tart,
As she strokes your hair, should say
'This is Atlantis, dearie,'
  Listen with attentiveness
  To her life-story: unless
You become acquainted now
  With each refuge that tries to
Counterfeit Atlantis, how
  Will you recognize the true?

Assuming you beach at last
  Near Atlantis, and begin
The terrible trek inland
  Through squalid woods and frozen

Tundras where all are soon lost;
If, forsaken then, you stand,
  Dismissal everywhere,
  Stone and snow, silence and air,
O remember the great dead
  And honour the fate you are,
Travelling and tormented,
  Dialectic and bizarre.

Stagger onward rejoicing;
  And even then if, perhaps
Having actually got
  To the last col, you collapse
With all Atlantis shining
Below you yet you cannot
  Descend, you should still be proud
Just to peep at Atlantis
  In a poetic vision:
Give thanks and lie down in peace,
  Having seen your salvation.

All the little household gods
  Have started crying, but say
Good-bye now, and put to sea.
  Farewell, my dear, farewell: may
Hermes, master of the roads
And the four dwarf Kabiri,
  Protect and serve you always;
  And may the Ancient of Days
Provide for all you must do
  His invisible guidance,
Lifting up, dear, upon you
  The light of His countenance.

# *Easy Knowledge*

Between attention and attention
The first and last decision
Is mortal distraction
Of earth and air,
Further and nearer,
The vague wants
Of days and nights,
And personal error;
And the fatigued face,
Taking the strain
Of the horizontal force
And the vertical thrust,
Makes random answer
To the crucial test;
The uncertain flesh
Scraping back chair
For the wrong train,
Falling in slush,
Before a friend's friends
Or shaking hands
With a snub-nosed winner.

The opening window, closing door,
Open, close, but not
To finish or restore;
These wishes get
No further than
The edges of the town,
And leaning asking from the car
Cannot tell us where we are;
While the divided face
Has no grace
No discretion,

No occupation
But registering
Acreage, mileage,
The easy knowledge
Of the virtuous thing.

## *Adolescence*

By landscape reminded once of his mother's figure
The mountain heights he remembers get bigger and bigger:
With the finest of mapping pens he fondly traces
All the family names on the familiar places.

Among green pastures straying he walks by still waters;
Surely a swan he seems to earth's unwise daughters,
Bending a beautiful head, worshipping not lying,
'Dear' the dear beak in the dear concha crying.

Under the trees the summer bands were playing;
'Dear boy, be brave as these roots,' he heard them saying:
Carries the good news gladly to a world in danger,
Is ready to argue, he smiles, with any stranger.

And yet this prophet, homing the day is ended,
Receives odd welcome from the country he so defended:
The band roars 'Coward, Coward,' in his human fever,
The giantess shuffles nearer, cries 'Deceiver'.

## *Our City*

Certainly our city with its byres of poverty down to
The river's edge, its cathedral, its engines, its dogs;
  Here is the cosmopolitan cooking
  And the light alloys and the glass.

Built by the conscience-stricken, the weapon-making,
By us. Wild rumours woo and terrify the crowd,
  Woo us. Betrayers thunder at, blackmail
  Us. But where now are They

Who without reproach showed us what our vanity
    has chosen,
Who pursued understanding with patience like a sex,
    had unlearnt
  Our hatred and towards the really better
  World had turned their face?

Who knows? The peaked and violent faces are exalted,
The feverish prejudiced lives do not care, and lost
  Their voice in the flutter of bunting, the glittering
  Brass of our great retreat,

And the malice of death. For the wicked card is dealt and
The sinister tall-hatted botanist stoops at the spring
  With his insignificant phial and looses
  The plague on the ignorant town.

Under their shadows the pitiful subalterns are sleeping;
The moon is usual; the necessary lovers touch;
  The river is alone and the trampled flower;
  And through years of absolute cold

The planets rush towards Lyra in a lion's charge. Can
Hate so securely bind? Are they dead here? Yes.
  And the wish to wound has the power. And to-morrow
  Comes. It's a world. It's a way.

# *Consider*

Consider this and in our time
As the hawk sees it or the helmeted airman:
The clouds rift suddenly—look there
At cigarette-end smouldering on a border
At the first garden party of the year.
Pass on, admire the view of the massif
Through plate-glass windows of the Sport Hotel;
Join there the insufficient units
Dangerous, easy, in furs, in uniform
And constellated at reserved tables
Supplied with feelings by an efficient band
Relayed elsewhere to farmers and their dogs
Sitting in kitchens in the stormy fens.

Long ago, supreme Antagonist,
More powerful than the great northern whale
Ancient and sorry at life's limiting defect,
In Cornwall, Mendip, or the Pennine moor
Your comments on the highborn mining-captains,
Found they no answer, made them wish to die
—Lie since in barrows out of harm.
You talk to your admirers every day
By silted harbours, derelict works,
In strangled orchards, and the silent comb
Where dogs have worried or a bird was shot.
Order the ill that they attack at once:
Visit the ports and, interrupting
The leisurely conversation in the bar
Within a stone's throw of the sunlit water,
Beckon your chosen out. Summon
Those handsome and diseased youngsters, those women
Your solitary agents in the country parishes;
And mobilize the powerful forces latent

In soils that make the farmer brutal
In the infected sinus, and the eyes of stoats.
Then, ready, start your rumour, soft
But horrifying in its capacity to disgust
Which, spreading magnified, shall come to be
A polar peril, a prodigious alarm,
Scattering the people, as torn-up paper
Rags and utensils in a sudden gust,
Seized with immeasurable neurotic dread.

Seekers after happiness, all who follow
The convolutions of your simple wish,
It is later than you think; nearer that day
Far other than that distant afternoon
Amid rustle of frocks and stamping feet
They gave the prizes to the ruined boys.
You cannot be away, then, no
Not though you pack to leave within an hour,
Escaping humming down arterial roads:
The date was yours; the prey to fugues,
Irregular breathing and alternate ascendancies
After some haunted migratory years
To disintegrate on an instant in the explosion of mania
Or lapse for ever into a classic fatigue.

## *The Secret Agent*

Control of the passes was, he saw, the key
To this new district, but who would get it?
He, the trained spy, had walked into the trap
For a bogus guide, seduced with the old tricks.

At Greenhearth was a fine site for a dam
And easy power, had they pushed the rail
Some stations nearer. They ignored his wires.
The bridges were unbuilt and trouble coming.

The street music seemed gracious now to one
For weeks up in the desert. Woken by water
Running away in the dark, he often had
Reproached the night for a companion
Dreamed of already. They would shoot, of course,
Parting easily who were never joined.

## *In Sickness and in Health**

*(For Maurice and Gwen Mandelbaum)*

Dear, all benevolence of fingering lips
That does not ask forgiveness is a noise
  At drunken feasts where Sorrow strips
To serve some glittering generalities:
Now, more than ever, we distinctly hear
The dreadful shuffle of a murderous year
And all our senses roaring as the Black
Dog leaps upon the individual back.

Whose sable genius understands too well
What code of famine can administrate
  Those inarticulate wastes where dwell
Our howling appetites: dear heart, do not
Think lightly to contrive his overthrow;
O promise nothing, nothing, till you know
The kingdom offered by the love-lorn eyes
A land of condors, sick cattle, and dead flies.

And how contagious is its desolation,
What figures of destruction unawares
  Jump out on Love's imagination
And chase away the castles and the bears;
How warped the mirrors where our worlds are made;
What armies burn up honour, and degrade
Our will-to-order into thermal waste;
How much lies smashed that cannot be replaced.

O let none say I Love until aware
What huge resources it will take to nurse
  One ruining speck, one tiny hair
That casts a shadow through the universe:
We are the deaf immured within a loud
And foreign language of revolt, a crowd
Of poaching hands and mouths who out of fear
Have learned a safer life than we can bear.

Nature by nature in unnature ends:
Echoing each other like two waterfalls,
  Tristan, Isolde, the great friends,
Make passion out of passion's obstacles;
Deliciously postponing their delight,
Prolong frustration till it lasts all night,
Then perish lest Brangaene's worldly cry
Should sober their cerebral ecstasy.

But, dying, conjure up their opposite,
Don Juan, so terrified of death he hears
  Each moment recommending it,
And knows no argument to counter theirs;
Trapped in their vile affections, he must find
Angels to keep him chaste; a helpless, blind,
Unhappy spook, he haunts the urinals,
Existing solely by their miracles.

That syllogistic nightmare must reject
The disobedient phallus for the sword;
  The lovers of themselves collect,
And Eros is politically adored:
New Machiavellis flying through the air
Express a metaphysical despair,
Murder their last voluptuous sensation,
All passion in one passionate negation.

Beloved, we are always in the wrong,
Handling so clumsily our stupid lives,
  Suffering too little or too long,
Too careful even in our selfish loves:
The decorative manias we obey
Die in grimaces round us every day,
Yet through their tohu-bohu comes a voice
Which utters an absurd command—Rejoice.

*Rejoice. What talent for the makeshift thought*
*A living corpus out of odds and ends?*
  *What pedagogic patience taught*
*Pre-occupied and savage elements*
*To dance into a segregated charm?*
*Who showed the whirlwind how to be an arm,*
*And gardened from the wilderness of space*
*The sensual properties of one dear face?*

Rejoice, dear love, in Love's peremptory word;
All chance, all love, all logic, you and I,
  Exist by grace of the Absurd,
And without conscious artifice we die:
O, lest we manufacture in our flesh
The lie of our divinity afresh,
Describe round our chaotic malice now,
The arbitrary circle of a vow.

The scarves, consoles, and fauteuils of the mind
May be composed into a picture still,
  The matter of corrupt mankind
Resistant to the dream that makes it ill,
Not by our choice but our consent: beloved, pray
That Love, to Whom necessity is play,
Do what we must yet cannot do alone
And lay your solitude beside my own.

That reason may not force us to commit
That sin of the high-minded, sublimation,
  Which damns the soul by praising it,
Force our desire, O Essence of creation,
To seek Thee always in Thy substances,
Till the performance of those offices
Our bodies, Thine opaque enigmas, do,
Configure Thy transparent justice too.

Lest animal bias should decline our wish
For Thy perfection to identify
  Thee with Thy things, to worship fish,
Or solid apples, or the wavering sky,
Our intellectual motions with Thy light
To such intense vibration, Love, excite,
That we give forth a quiet none can tell
From that in which the lichens live so well.

That this round O of faithfulness we swear
May never wither to an empty nought
  Nor petrify into a square,
Mere habits of affection freeze our thought
In their inert society, lest we
Mock virtue with its pious parody
And take our love for granted, Love permit
Temptations always to endanger it.

Lest, blurring with old moonlight of romance
The landscape of our blemishes, we try
To set up shop on Goodwin Sands,
That we, though lovers, may love soberly,
O Fate, O *Felix Osculum*, to us
Remain nocturnal and mysterious:
Preserve us from presumption and delay;
O hold us to the voluntary way.

## *The Sphinx*

Did it once issue from the carver's hand
Healthy? Even the earliest conquerors saw
The face of a sick ape, a bandaged paw,
A Presence in the hot invaded land.

The lion of a tortured stubborn star,
It does not like the young, nor love, nor learning:
Time hurt it like a person; it lies, turning
A vast behind on shrill America.

And witnesses. The huge hurt face accuses,
And pardons nothing, least of all success.
The answers that it utters have no uses
To those who face akimbo its distress:
'Do people like me?' No. The slave amuses
The lion: 'Am I to suffer always?' Yes.

## *The Wanderer*

Doom is dark and deeper than any sea-dingle.
Upon what man it fall
In spring, day-wishing flowers appearing,

Avalanche sliding, white snow from rock-face,
That he should leave his house,
No cloud-soft hand can hold him, restraint by women;
But ever that man goes
Through place-keepers, through forest trees,
A stranger to strangers over undried sea,
Houses for fishes, suffocating water,
Or lonely on fell as chat,
By pot-holed becks
A bird stone-haunting, an unquiet bird.

There head falls forward, fatigued at evening,
And dreams of home,
Waving from window, spread of welcome,
Kissing of wife under single sheet;
But waking sees
Bird-flocks nameless to him, through doorway voices
Of new men making another love.

Save him from hostile capture,
From sudden tiger's spring at corner;
Protect his house,
His anxious house where days are counted
From thunderbolt protect,
From gradual ruin spreading like a stain;
Converting number from vague to certain,
Bring joy, bring day of his returning,
Lucky with day approaching, with leaning dawn.

## *Alone**

Each lover has some theory of his own
About the difference between the ache
Of being with his love, and being alone:

Why what, when dreaming, is dear flesh and bone
That really stirs the senses, when awake,
Appears a simulacrum of his own.

Narcissus disbelieves in the unknown;
He cannot join his image in the lake
So long as he assumes he is alone.

The child, the waterfall, the fire, the stone,
Are always up to mischief, though, and take
The universe for granted as their own.

The elderly, like Proust, are always prone
To think of love as a subjective fake;
The more they love, the more they feel alone.

Whatever view we hold, it must be shown
Why every lover has a wish to make
Some other kind of otherness his own:
Perhaps, in fact, we never are alone.

## *A Bride in the 30's*

Easily, my dear, you move, easily your head,
And easily as through leaves of a photograph album I'm led
Through the night's delights and the day's impressions,
Past the tall tenements and the trees in the wood,
Though sombre the sixteen skies of Europe
And the Danube flood.

Looking and loving our behaviours pass
The stones, the steels, and the polished glass;
Lucky to love the strategic railway,
The sterile farms where his looks are fed,
And in the policed unlucky city
Lucky his bed.

He from these lands of terrifying mottoes
Makes worlds as innocent as Beatrix Potter's;
Through bankrupt countries where they mend the roads
Along the endless plains his will is,
Intent as a collector, to pursue
His greens and lilies

Easy for him to find in your face
The pool of silence and the tower of grace,
To conjure a camera into a wishing rose;
Simple to excite in the air from a glance
The horses, the fountains, the side-drum, the trombone,
And the dance, the dance.

Summoned by such a music from our time
Such images to audience come
As vanity cannot dispel nor bless;
Hunger and love in their variations,
Grouped invalids watching the flight of the birds,
And single assassins,

Ten million of the desperate marching by,
Five feet, six feet, seven feet high,
Hitler and Mussolini in their wooing poses,
Churchill acknowledging the voters' greeting,
Roosevelt at the microphone, Van der Lubbe laughing,
And our first meeting

But love except at our proposal
Will do no trick at his disposal,
Without opinions of his own performs
The programme that we think of merit,
And through our private stuff must work
His public spirit.

Certain it became while we were still incomplete
There were certain prizes for which we would
never compete;
A choice was killed by every childish illness,
The boiling tears amid the hot-house plants,
The rigid promise fractured in the garden
And the long aunts

And every day there bolted from the field
Desires to which we could not yield;
Fewer and clearer grew the plans,
Schemes for a life and sketches for a hatred,
And early among my interesting scrawls
Appeared your portrait.

You stand now before me, flesh and bone
These ghosts would like to make their own.
Are they your choices? O be deaf
When hatred would proffer her immediate pleasure,
And glory swap her fascinating rubbish
For your one treasure.

Be deaf, too, standing uncertain now,
A pine-tree shadow across your brow,
To what I hear and wish I did not,
The voice of love saying lightly, brightly—
'Be Lubbe, be Hitler, but be my good
Daily, nightly.'

The power that corrupts, that power to excess
The beautiful quite naturally possess;
To them the fathers and the children turn,
And all who long for their destruction,
The arrogant and self-insulted, wait
The looked instruction.

Shall idleness ring then your eyes like the pest,
O will you, unnoticed and mildly like the rest,
Will you join the lost in their sneering circles,
Forfeit the beautiful interest and fall
Where the engaging face is the face of the betrayer
And the pang is all?

Wind shakes the tree; the mountains darken;
But the heart repeats though we would not hearken:
Yours is the choice to whom the gods awarded
The language of learning and the language of love,
Crooked to move as a moneybag or a cancer,
Or straight as a dove.'

## *The Novelist*

Encased in talent like a uniform,
The rank of every poet is well known;
They can amaze us like a thunderstorm,
Or die so young, or live for years alone.

They can dash forward like hussars: but he
Must struggle out of his boyish gift and learn
How to be plain and awkward, how to be
One after whom none think it worth to turn.

For, to achieve his lightest wish, he must
Become the whole of boredom, subject to
Vulgar complaints like love, among the Just

Be just, among the Filthy filthy too,
And in his own weak person, if he can,
Must suffer dully all the wrongs of Man.

# *Legend*

Enter with him
These legends, Love;
For him assume
Each diverse form
To legend native,
As legend queer;
That he may do
What these require,
Be, Love, like him
To legend true.

When he to ease
His heart's disease
Must cross in sorrow
Corrosive seas,
As dolphin go;
As cunning fox
Guide through the rocks,
Tell in his ear
The common phrase
Required to please
The guardians there;
And when across
The livid marsh
Big birds pursue,
Again be true,
Between his thighs
As pony rise,
And swift as wind
Bear him away
Till cries and they
Are left behind.

But when at last,
These dangers passed,
His grown desire
Of legend tire,
O then, Love, standing
At legend's ending,
Claim your reward;
Submit your neck
To the ungrateful stroke
Of his reluctant sword,
That, starting back,
His eyes may look
Amazed on you,
Find what he wanted
Is faithful too
But disenchanted,
Your finite love.

## *The Climbers*

Fleeing the short-haired made executives,
The sad and useless faces round my home,
Upon the mountains of my fear I climb;
Above, the breakneck scorching rock, the caves,
No col, no water; with excuse concocted,
Soon on a lower alp I fall and pant,
Cooling my face there in the faults that flaunt
The life which they have stolen and perfected.

Climbing with you was easy as a vow:
We reached the top not hungry in the least,
But it was eyes we looked at, not the view,
Saw nothing but ourselves, left-handed, lost;
Returned to shore, the rich interior still
Unknown. Love gave the power, but took the will.

## *Another Time*

For us like any other fugitive,
Like the numberless flowers that cannot number
And all the beasts that need not remember,
It is to-day in which we live.

So many try to say Not Now,
So many have forgotten how
To say I Am, and would be
Lost, if they could, in history.

Bowing, for instance, with such old-world grace
To a proper flag in a proper place,
Muttering like ancients as they stump upstairs
Of Mine and His or Ours and Theirs.

Just as if time were what they used to will
When it was gifted with possession still,
Just as if they were wrong
In no more wishing to belong.

No wonder then so many die of grief,
So many are so lonely as they die;
No one has yet believed or liked a lie,
Another time has other lives to live.

## *To You Simply**

For what as easy
For what though small,
For what is well

Because between,
To you simply
From me I mean

Who goes with who
The bedclothes say
As I and you
Go kissed away,
The data given,
The senses even

Fate is not late,
Nor the speech rewritten,
Nor one word forgotten,
Said at the start
About heart,
By heart, for heart.

## *Missing*

From scars where kestrels hover,
The leader looking over
Into the happy valley,
Orchard and curving river,
May turn away to see
The slow fastidious line
That disciplines the fell,
Hear curlew's creaking call
From angles unforeseen,
The drumming of a snipe
Surprise where driven sleet
Had scalded to the bone
And streams are acrid yet
To an unaccustomed lip;

The tall unwounded leader
Of doomed companions, all
Whose voices in the rock
Are now perpetual,
Fighters for no one's sake,
Who died beyond the border.

Heroes are buried who
Did not believe in death
And bravery is now
Not in the dying breath
But resisting the temptations
To skyline operations.
Yet glory is not new;
The summer visitors
Still come from far and wide,
Choosing their spots to view
The prize competitors,
Each thinking that he will
Find heroes in the wood,
Far from the capital

Where lights and wine are set
For supper by the lake,
But leaders must migrate:
'Leave for Cape Wrath to-night,'
And the host after waiting
Must quench the lamps and pass
Alive into the house.

# *The Love Letter*

From the very first coming down
Into a new valley with a frown
Because of the sun and a lost way,
You certainly remained: to-day
I, crouching behind a sheep-pen, heard
Travel across a sudden bird,
Cry out against the storm, and found
The year's arc a completed round
And love's worn circuit re-begun,
Endless with no dissenting turn.
Shall see, shall pass, as we have seen
The swallow on the tile, spring's green
Preliminary shiver, passed
A solitary truck, the last
Of shunting in the Autumn. But now
To interrupt the homely brow,
Thought warmed to evening through and through
Your letter comes, speaking as you,
Speaking of much but not to come.

Nor speech is close nor fingers numb,
If love not seldom has received
An unjust answer, was deceived.
I, decent with the seasons, move
Different or with a different love,
Nor question overmuch the nod,
The stone smile of this country god
That never was more reticent,
Always afraid to say more than it meant.

# *The Model**

Generally, reading palms or handwriting or faces
  Is a job of translation, since the kind
    Gentleman often is
  A seducer, the frowning schoolgirl may
    Be dying to be asked to stay;
But the body of this old lady exactly indicates her mind;

Rorschach or Binet could not add to what a fool can see
  From the plain fact that she is alive and well;
    For when one is eighty
  Even a teeny-weeny bit of greed
    Makes one very ill indeed,
And a touch of despair is instantaneously fatal:

Whether the town once drank bubbly out of her shoes
      or whether
  She was a governess with a good name
    In Church circles, if her
  Husband spoiled her or if she lost her son,
    Is by this time all one.
She survived her true condition; she forgave;
      she became.

So the painter may please himself; give her an
      English park,
  Rice-fields in China, or a slum tenement;
    Make the sky light or dark;
  Put green plush behind her or a red brick wall.
    She will compose them all,
Centring the eye on their essential human element.

# *Culture*

Happy the hare at morning, for she cannot read
The Hunter's waking thoughts, lucky the leaf
Unable to predict the fall, lucky indeed
The rampant suffering suffocating jelly
Burgeoning in pools, lapping the grits of the desert,
But what shall man do, who can whistle tunes by heart,
Knows to the bar when death shall cut him short like the cry of the shearwater,
What can he do but defend himself from his knowledge?

How comely are his places of refuge and the tabernacles of his peace,
The new books upon the morning table, the lawns and the afternoon terraces!
Here are the playing-fields where he may forget his ignorance
To operate within a gentleman's agreement: twenty-two sins have here a certain licence.
Here are the thickets where accosted lovers combatant
May warm each other with their wicked hands,
Here are the avenues for incantation and workshops for the cunning engravers.
The galleries are full of music, the pianist is storming the keys, the great cellist is crucified over his instrument,
That none may hear the ejaculations of the sentinels
Nor the sigh of the most numerous and the most poor; the thud of their falling bodies
Who with their lives have banished hence the serpent and the faceless insect.

# *Paysage Moralisé*

Hearing of harvests rotting in the valleys
Seeing at end of street the barren mountains,
Round corners coming suddenly on water,
Knowing them shipwrecked who were launched for islands,
We honour founders of these starving cities
Whose honour is the image of our sorrow,

Which cannot see its likeness in their sorrow
That brought them desperate to the brink of valleys;
Dreaming of evening walks through learned cities
They reined their violent horses on the mountains,
Those fields like ships to castaways on islands,
Visions of green to them who craved for water.

They built by rivers and at night the water
Running past windows comforted their sorrow;
Each in his little bed conceived of islands
Where every day was dancing in the valleys
And all the green trees blossomed on the mountains
Where love was innocent, being far from cities.

But dawn came back and they were still in cities;
No marvellous creature rose up from the water;
There was still gold and silver in the mountains
But hunger was a more immediate sorrow,
Although to moping villagers in valleys
Some waving pilgrims were describing islands . . .

'The gods,' they promised, 'visit us from islands,
Are stalking, head-up, lovely, through our cities;
Now is the time to leave your wretched valleys
And sail with them across the lime-green water,
Sitting at their white sides, forget your sorrow,
The shadow cast across your lives by mountains'

So many, doubtful, perished in the mountains,
Climbing up crags to get a view of islands,
So many, fearful, took with them their sorrow
Which stayed them when they reached unhappy cities,
So many, careless, dived and drowned in water,
So many, wretched, would not leave their valleys.

It is our sorrow. Shall it melt? Ah, water
Would gush, flush, green these mountains and
these valleys,
And we rebuild our cities, not dream of islands.

## *In Memory of W. B. Yeats*

(*d. January* 1939)

I

He disappeared in the dead of winter:
The brooks were frozen, the airports almost deserted,
And snow disfigured the public statues;
The mercury sank in the mouth of the dying day.
O all the instruments agree
The day of his death was a dark cold day.

Far from his illness
The wolves ran on through the evergreen forests,
The peasant river was untempted by the fashionable quays;
By mourning tongues
The death of the poet was kept from his poems.

But for him it was his last afternoon as himself,
An afternoon of nurses and rumours;
The provinces of his body revolted,
The squares of his mind were empty,
Silence invaded the suburbs,
The current of his feeling failed: he became his admirers.

Now he is scattered among a hundred cities
And wholly given over to unfamiliar affections,
To find his happiness in another kind of wood
And be punished under a foreign code of conscience;
The words of a dead man
Are modified in the guts of the living.

But in the importance and noise of to-morrow
When the brokers are roaring like beasts on the floor of
the Bourse,
And the poor have the sufferings to which they are
fairly accustomed,
And each in the cell of himself is almost convinced of
his freedom,
A few thousand will think of this day
As one thinks of a day when one did something slightly unusual.
O all the instruments agree
The day of his death was a dark cold day.

. .

## II

You were silly like us: your gift survived it all;
The parish of rich women, physical decay,
Yourself; mad Ireland hurt you into poetry.
Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,
For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its saying where executives
Would never want to tamper; it flows south
From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,
A way of happening, a mouth.

## III

Earth, receive an honoured guest;
William Yeats is laid to rest:
Let the Irish vessel lie
Emptied of its poetry.

Time that is intolerant
Of the brave and innocent,
And indifferent in a week
To a beautiful physique,

Worships language and forgives
Everyone by whom it lives;
Pardons cowardice, conceit,
Lays its honours at their feet.

Time that with this strange excuse
Pardoned Kipling and his views,
And will pardon Paul Claudel,
Pardons him for writing well.

In the nightmare of the dark
All the dogs of Europe bark,
And the living nations wait,
Each sequestered in its hate;

Intellectual disgrace
Stares from every human face,
And the seas of pity lie
Locked and frozen in each eye.

Follow, poet, follow right
To the bottom of the night,
With your unconstraining voice
Still persuade us to rejoice;

With the farming of a verse
Make a vineyard of the curse,
Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress;

In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.

## *Hell*

Hell is neither here nor there
Hell is not anywhere
Hell is hard to bear.

It is so hard to dream posterity
Or haunt a ruined century
And so much easier to be.

Only the challenge to our will,
Our pride in learning any skill,
Sustains our effort to be ill.

To talk the dictionary through
Without a chance word coming true
Is more than Darwin's apes could do.

Yet pride alone could not insist
Did we not hope, if we persist,
That one day Hell might actually exist.

In time, pretending to be blind
And universally unkind
Might really send us out of our mind.

If we were really wretched and asleep
It would be easy then to weep,
It would be natural to lie,
There'd be no living left to die.

## *Schoolchildren*

Here are all the captivities; the cells are as real:
But these are unlike the prisoners we know
Who are outraged or pining or wittily resigned
Or just wish all away.

For they dissent so little, so nearly content
With the dumb play of the dog, the licking and rushing;
The bars of love are so strong, their conspiracies
Weak like the vows of drunkards.

Indeed their strangeness is difficult to watch:
The condemned see only the fallacious angels of a vision;
So little effort lies behind their smiling,
The beast of vocation is afraid.

But watch them, O, set against our size and timing
The almost neuter, the slightly awkward perfection;
For the sex is there, the broken bootlace is broken,
The professor's dream is not true.

Yet the tyranny is so easy. The improper word
Scribbled upon the fountain, is that all the rebellion?
The storm of tears shed in the corner, are these
The seeds of the new life?

# *The Malverns*

Here on the cropped grass of the narrow ridge I stand,
A fathom of earth, alive in air
Aloof as an admiral on the old rocks,
  England below me:
Eastward across the Midland plains
An express is leaving for a sailor's country;
  Westward is Wales
Where on clear evenings the retired and rich
From the french windows of their sheltered mansions
See the Sugarloaf standing, an upright sentinel
  Over Abergavenny.

When last I stood here I was not alone; happy
Each thought the other, thinking of a crime,
And England to our meditations seemed
  The perfect setting:
But now it has no innocence at all;
It is the isolation and the fear,
  The mood itself;
It is the body of the absent lover,
An image to the would-be hero of the soul,
The little area we are willing to forgive
  Upon conditions.

For private reasons I must have the truth, remember
These years have seen a boom in sorrow;
The presses of idleness issued more despair
  And it was honoured,
Gross Hunger took on more hands every month,
Erecting here and everywhere his vast
  Unnecessary workshops,
Europe grew anxious about her health,
Combines tottered, credits froze,

And business shivered in a banker's winter
  While we were kissing.

To-day no longer occupied like that, I give
The children at the open swimming pool
Lithe in their first and little beauty
  A closer look;
Follow the cramped clerk crooked at his desk
The guide in shorts pursuing flowers
  In their careers;
A digit of the crowd, would like to know
Them better whom the shops and trams are full of,
The little men and their mothers, not plain but
  Dreadfully ugly.

Deaf to the Welsh wind now, I hear arising
From lanterned gardens sloping to the river
Where saxophones are moaning for a comforter,
  From Gaumont theatres
Where fancy plays on hunger to produce
The noble robber, ideal of boys,
  And from cathedrals,
Luxury liners laden with souls,
Holding to the east their hulls of stone,
The high thin rare continuous worship
  Of the self-absorbed.

Here, which looked north before the Cambrian alignment,
Like the cupped hand of the keen excavator
Busy with bones, the memory uncovers
  The hopes of time;
Of empires stiff in their brocaded glory,
The luscious lateral blossoming of woe
  Scented, profuse;
And of intercalary ages of disorder

When, as they prayed in antres, fell
Upon the noblest in the country night
  Angel assassins.

Small birds above me have the grace of those who founded
The civilization of the delicate olive,
Learning the laws of love and sailing
  On the calm Aegean;
The hawk is the symbol of the rule by thirst,
The central state controlling the canals;
  And the blank sky
Of the womb's utter peace before
The cell, dividing, multiplied desire,
And raised instead of death the image
  Of the reconciler.

And over the Cotswolds now the thunder mutters:
'What little of the truth you seers saw
They dared not tell you plainly but combined
  Assertion and refuge
In the common language of collective lying,
In codes of a bureau, laboratory slang
  And diplomats' French.
The relations of your lovers were, alas, pictorial;
The treasure that you stole, you lost; bad luck
It brought you, but you cannot put it back
  Now with caresses.

'Already behind your last evening hastens up
And all the customs your society has chosen
Harden themselves into the unbreakable
  Habits of death,
Has not your long affair with death
Of late become increasingly more serious;
  Do you not find
Him growing more attractive every day?

You shall go under and help him with the crops,
Be faithful to him, and to your friends
  Remain indifferent.'

The Priory clock chimes briefly and I recollect
I am expected to return alive
My will effective and my nerves in order
  To my situation.
'The poetry is in the pity,' Wilfred said,
And Kathy in her journal, 'To be rooted in life,
  That's what I want.'
These moods give no permission to be idle,
For men are changed by what they do;
And through loss and anger the hands of the unlucky
  Love one another.

## *To E. M. Forster*

Here, though the bombs are real and dangerous,
And Italy and King's are far away,
And we're afraid that you will speak to us,
You promise still the inner life shall pay.

As we run down the slope of Hate with gladness
You trip us up like an unnoticed stone,
And just as we are closeted with Madness
You interrupt us like the telephone.

For we are Lucy, Turton, Philip, we
Wish international evil, are excited
To join the jolly ranks of the benighted

Where Reason is denied and Love ignored:
But, as we swear our lie, Miss Avery
Comes out into the garden with the sword.

## *Matthew Arnold*

His gift knew what he was—a dark disordered city;
Doubt hid it from the father's fond chastising sky;
Where once the mother-farms had glowed protectively,
Stood the haphazard alleys of the neighbour's pity.

—Yet would have gladly lived in him and learned his ways,
And grown observant like a beggar, and become
Familiar with each square and boulevard and slum,
And found in the disorder a whole world to praise.

But all his homeless reverence, revolted, cried:
'I am my father's forum and he shall be heard,
Nothing shall contradict his holy final word,
Nothing.' And thrust his gift in prison till it died,

And left him nothing but a jailor's voice and face,
And all rang hollow but the clear denunciation
Of a gregarious optimistic generation
That saw itself already in a father's place.

## *The Traveller*

Holding the distance up before his face
And standing under the peculiar tree,
He seeks the hostile unfamiliar place,
It is the strangeness that he tries to see

Of lands where he will not be asked to stay;
And fights with all his powers to be the same,
The One who loves Another far away,
And has a home, and wears his father's name.

Yet he and his are always the Expected:
The harbours touch him as he leaves the steamer,
The Soft, the Sweet, the Easily-Accepted;

The cities hold his feeling like a fan;
And crowds make room for him without a murmur,
As the earth has patience with the life of man.

## *1st September 1939*

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade:
Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives;
The unmentionable odour of death
Offends the September night.

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god:
I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.

Exiled Thucydides knew
All that a speech can say
About Democracy,
And what dictators do,
The elderly rubbish they talk
To an apathetic grave;
Analysed all in his book,
The enlightenment driven away,
The habit-forming pain,
Mismanagement and grief:
We must suffer them all again.

Into this neutral air
Where blind skyscrapers use
Their full height to proclaim
The strength of Collective Man,
Each language pours its vain
Competitive excuse:
But who can live for long
In an euphoric dream;
Out of the mirror they stare,
Imperialism's face
And the international wrong.

Faces along the bar
Cling to their average day:
The lights must never go out,
The music must always play,
All the conventions conspire
To make this fort assume
The furniture of home;
Lest we should see where we are,
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the night
Who have never been happy or good.

The windiest militant trash
Important Persons shout
Is not so crude as our wish:
What mad Nijinsky wrote
About Diaghilev
Is true of the normal heart;
For the error bred in the bone
Of each woman and each man
Craves what it cannot have,
Not universal love
But to be loved alone.

From the conservative dark
Into the ethical life
The dense commuters come,
Repeating their morning vow;
'I *will* be true to the wife,
I'll concentrate more on my work,'
And helpless governors wake
To resume their compulsory game:
Who can release them now,
Who can reach the deaf,
Who can speak for the dumb?

Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:
May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.

# *Danse Macabre*

It's farewell to the drawing-room's civilized cry,
The professor's sensible whereto and why,
The frock-coated diplomat's social aplomb,
Now matters are settled with gas and with bomb.

The works for two pianos, the brilliant stories
Of reasonable giants and remarkable fairies,
The pictures, the ointments, the frangible wares
And the branches of olive are stored upstairs.

For the Devil has broken parole and arisen,
He has dynamited his way out of prison,
Out of the well where his Papa throws
The rebel angel, the outcast rose.

Like influenza he walks abroad,
He stands by the bridge, he waits by the ford,
As a goose or a gull he flies overhead,
He hides in the cupboard and under the bed.

O were he to triumph, dear heart, you know
To what depths of shame he would drag you low;
He would steal you away from me, yes, my dear,
He would steal you and cut off your beautiful hair.

Millions already have come to their harm,
Succumbing like doves to his adder's charm;
Hundreds of trees in the wood are unsound:
I'm the axe that must cut them down to the ground.

For I, after all, am the Fortunate One,
The Happy-Go-Lucky, the spoilt Third Son;
For me it is written the Devil to chase
And to rid the earth of the human race.

The behaving of man is a world of horror,
A sedentary Sodom and slick Gomorrah;
I must take charge of the liquid fire
And storm the cities of human desire.

The buying and selling, the eating and drinking,
The disloyal machines and irreverent thinking,
The lovely dullards again and again
Inspiring their bitter ambitious men.

I shall come, I shall punish, the Devil be dead,
I shall have caviar thick on my bread,
I shall build myself a cathedral for home
With a vacuum cleaner in every room.

I shall ride the parade in a platinum car,
My features shall shine, my name shall be Star,
Day-long and night-long the bells I shall peal,
And down the long street I shall turn the cartwheel.

So Little John, Long John, Peter and Paul,
And poor little Horace with only one ball,
You shall leave your breakfast, your desk and your play
On a fine summer morning the Devil to slay.

For it's order and trumpet and anger and drum
And power and glory command you to come;
The graves shall fly open and let you all in,
And the earth shall be emptied of mortal sin.

The fishes are silent deep in the sea,
The skies are lit up like a Christmas tree,
The star in the West shoots its warning cry:
'Mankind is alive, but Mankind must die.'

So good-bye to the house with its wallpaper red,
Good-bye to the sheets on the warm double bed,
Good-bye to the beautiful birds on the wall,
It's good-bye, dear heart, good-bye to you all.

## *Hongkong 1938*

Its leading characters are wise and witty;
Substantial men of birth and education
With wide experience of administration,
They know the manners of a modern city.

Only the servants enter unexpected;
Their silence has a fresh dramatic use:
Here in the East the bankers have erected
A worthy temple to the Comic Muse.

Ten thousand miles from home and What's-her-name,
The bugle on the Late Victorian hill
Puts out the soldier's light; off-stage, a war

Thuds like the slamming of a distant door:
We cannot postulate a General Will;
For what we are, we have ourselves to blame.

## *1929*

### I

It was Easter as I walked in the public gardens
Hearing the frogs exhaling from the pond,
Watching traffic of magnificent cloud
Moving without anxiety on open sky—
Season when lovers and writers find
An altering speech for altering things,
An emphasis on new names, on the arm
A fresh hand with fresh power.
But thinking so I came at once
Where solitary man sat weeping on a bench,
Hanging his head down, with his mouth distorted
Helpless and ugly as an embryo chicken.

So I remember all of those whose death
Is necessary condition of the season's setting forth,
Who sorry in this time look only back
To Christmas intimacy, a winter dialogue
Fading in silence, leaving them in tears.
And recent particulars come to mind;
The death by cancer of a once hated master,
A friend's analysis of his own failure,
Listened to at intervals throughout the winter
At different hours and in different rooms.
But always with success of others for comparison,
The happiness, for instance, of my friend Kurt Groote,
Absence of fear in Gerhart Meyer
From the sea, the truly strong man.

A 'bus ran home then, on the public ground
Lay fallen bicycles like huddled corpses:
No chattering valves of laughter emphasised
Nor the swept gown ends of a gesture stirred
The sessile hush; until a sudden shower
Fell willing into grass and closed the day,
Making choice seem a necessary error.

II

Coming out of me living is always thinking,
Thinking changing and changing living,
Am feeling as it was seeing—
In city leaning on harbour parapet
To watch a colony of duck below
Sit, preen, and doze on buttresses
Or upright paddle on flickering stream,
Casually fishing at a passing straw.
Those find sun's luxury enough,
Shadow know not of homesick foreigner
Nor restlessness of intercepted growth.

All this time was anxiety at night,
Shooting and barricade in street.
Walking home late I listened to a friend
Talking excitedly of final war
Of proletariat against police—
That one shot girl of nineteen through the knees
They threw that one down concrete stair—
Till I was angry, said I was pleased.

Time passes in Hessen, in Gutensberg,
With hill-top and evening holds me up,
Tiny observer of enormous world.
Smoke rises from factory in field,
Memory of fire: On all sides heard
Vanishing music of isolated larks:
From village square voices in hymn,
Men's voices, an old use.
And I above standing, saying in thinking:

'Is first baby, warm in mother,
Before born and is still mother,
Time passes and now is other,
Is knowledge in him now of other,
Cries in cold air, himself no friend.
In grown man also, may see in face
In his day-thinking and in his night-thinking
Is wareness and is fear of other,
Alone in flesh, himself no friend.'

He says, 'We must forgive and forget,'
Forgetting saying but is unforgiving
And unforgiving is in his living;
Body reminds in him to loving,
Reminds but takes no further part,
Perfunctorily affectionate in hired room
But takes no part and is unloving

But loving death. May see in dead,
In face of dead that loving wish,
As one returns from Africa to wife
And his ancestral property in Wales.

Yet sometimes men look and say good
A strict beauty of locomotive,
Completeness of gesture or unclouded eye;
In me so absolute unity of evening
And field and distance was in me for peace
Was over me in feeling without forgetting
Those ducks' indifference, that friend's hysteria,
Without wishing and with forgiving,
To love my life, not as other,
Not as bird's life, not as child's,
'Cannot', I said, 'being no child now nor a bird.'

III

Order to stewards and the study of time,
Correct in books, was earlier than this
But joined this by the wires I watched from train,
Slackening of wire and posts' sharp reprimand,
In month of August to a cottage coming.

Being alone, the frightened soul
Returns to this life of sheep and hay
No longer his: he every hour
Moves further from this and must so move,
As child is weaned from his mother and leaves home
But taking the first steps falters, is vexed,
Happy only to find home, a place
Where no tax is levied for being there.

So, insecure, he loves and love
Is insecure, gives less than he expects.
He knows not if it be seed in time to display

Luxuriantly in a wonderful fructification
Or whether it be but a degenerate remnant
Of something immense in the past but now
Surviving only as the infectiousness of disease
Or in the malicious caricature of drunkenness;
Its end glossed over by the careless but known long
To finer perception of the mad and ill.

Moving along the track which is himself,
He loves what he hopes will last, which gone,
Begins the difficult work of mourning,
And as foreign settlers to strange country come,
By mispronunciation of native words
And by intermarriage create a new race
And a new language, so may the soul
Be weaned at last to independent delight.

Startled by the violent laugh of a jay
I went from wood, from crunch underfoot,
Air between stems as under water;
As I shall leave the summer, see autumn come
Focusing stars more sharply in the sky,
See frozen buzzard flipped down the weir
And carried out to sea, leave autumn,
See winter, winter for earth and us,
A forethought of death that we may find ourselves at death
Not helplessly strange to the new conditions.

## IV

It is time for the destruction of error.
The chairs are being brought in from the garden,
The summer talk stopped on that savage coast
Before the storms, after the guests and birds:
In sanatoriums they laugh less and less,
Less certain of cure; and the loud madman
Sinks now into a more terrible calm.

The falling children know it, the children,
At play on the fuming alkali-tip
Or by the flooded football ground know it—
This is the dragon's day, the devourer's:
Orders are given to the enemy for a time
With underground proliferation of mould,
With constant whisper and the casual question,
To haunt the poisoned in his shunned house,
To destroy the efflorescence of the flesh,
The intricate play of the mind, to enforce
Conformity with the orthodox bone,
With organized fear, the articulated skeleton.

You whom I gladly walk with, touch,
Or wait for as one certain of good,
We know it, we know that love
Needs more than the admiring excitement of union,
More than the abrupt self-confident farewell,
The heel on the finishing blade of grass,
The self-confidence of the falling root,
Needs death, death of the grain, our death,
Death of the old gang; would leave them
In sullen valley where is made no friend,
The old gang to be forgotten in the spring,
The hard bitch and the riding-master,
Stiff underground; deep in clear lake
The lolling bridegroom, beautiful, there.

## *Many Happy Returns**

*(For John Rettger)*

Johnny, since to-day is
February the twelfth when
Neighbours and relations
Think of you and wish,

Though a staunch Aquarian,
Graciously accept the
Verbal celebrations
  Of a doubtful Fish.

Seven years ago you
Warmed your mother's heart by
Making a successful
  Début on our stage;
Naïveté's an act that
You already know you
Cannot get away with
  Even at your age.

So I wish you first a
Sense of theatre; only
Those who love illusion
  And know it will go far:
Otherwise we spend our
Lives in a confusion
Of what we say and do with
  Who we really are.

You will any day now
Have this revelation;
'Why, we're all like people
  Acting in a play.'
And will suffer, Johnny,
Man's unique temptation
Precisely at the moment
  You utter this cliché.

Remember if you can then,
Only the All-Father
Can change the cast or give them
  Easier lines to say;

Deliberate interference
With others for their own good
Is not allowed the author
  Of the play within The Play.

Just because our pride's an
Evil there's no end to,
Birthdays and the arts are
  Justified, for when
We consciously pretend to
Own the earth or play at
Being gods, thereby we
  Own that we are men.

As a human creature
You will all too often
Forget your proper station,
  Johnny, like us all;
Therefore let your birthday
Be a wild occasion
Like a Saturnalia
  Or a Servants' Ball.

What else shall I wish you?
Following convention
Shall I wish you Beauty
  Money, Happiness?
Or anything you mention?
No, for I recall an
Ancient proverb;—Nothing
  Fails like a success.

What limping devil sets our
Head and heart at variance,
That each time the Younger
  Generation sails,

The old and weather-beaten
Deny their own experience
And pray the gods to send them
  Calm seas, auspicious gales?

I'm not such an idiot
As to claim the power
To peer into the vistas
  Of your future, still
I'm prepared to guess you
Have not found your life as
Easy as your sister's
  And you never will.

If I'm right about this,
May you in your troubles,
Neither (like so many
  In the U.S.A.)
Be ashamed of any
Suffering as vulgar,
Nor bear them like a hero
  In the biggest way.

All the possibilities
It had to reject are
What give life and warmth to
  An actual character;
The roots of wit and charm tap
Secret springs of sorrow,
Every brilliant doctor
  Hides a murderer.

Then, since all self-knowledge
Tempts man into envy,
May you, by acquiring
  Proficiency in what

Whitehead calls the art of
Negative Prehension,
Love without desiring
  All that you are not.

Tao is a tightrope,
So to keep your balance,
May you always, Johnny,
  Manage to combine
Intellectual talents
With a sensual gusto,
The Socratic Doubt with
  The Socratic Sign.

That is all that I can
Think of at this moment
And it's time I brought these
  Verses to a close:
Happy Birthday, Johnny,
Live beyond your income,
Travel for enjoyment,
  Follow your own nose.

## *Nobody Understands Me*

Just as his dream foretold, he met them all:
The smiling grimy boy at the garage
Ran out before he blew his horn; the tall
Professor in the mountains with his large
Tweed pockets full of plants addressed him hours
Before he would have dared; the deaf girl too
Seemed to expect him at the green château;
The meal was laid, the guest room full of flowers.

More, the talk always took the wished-for turn,
Dwelt on the need for stroking and advice;
Yet, at each meeting, he was forced to learn,
The same misunderstanding would arise.
Which was in need of help? Were they or he
The physician, bridegroom, and incendiary?

## *Mundus et Infans**

*(For Arthur and Angelyn Stevens)*

Kicking his mother until she let go of his soul
Has given him a healthy appetite: clearly, her rôle
  In the New Order must be
To supply and deliver his raw materials free;
  Should there be any shortage,
She will be held responsible; she also promises
To show him all such attentions as befit his age.
  Having dictated peace,

With one fist clenched behind his head, heel drawn up to thigh
The cocky little ogre dozes off, ready,
  Though, to take on the rest
Of the world at the drop of a hat or the mildest
  Nudge of the impossible,
Resolved, cost what it may, to seize supreme power and
Sworn to resist tyranny to the death with all
  Forces at his command.

A pantheist not a solipsist, he co-operates
With a universe of large and noisy feeling-states
  Without troubling to place
Them anywhere special, for, to his eyes, Funnyface
  Or Elephant as yet

Law is the clothes men wear
Anytime, anywhere,
Law is Good morning and Good night.

Others say, Law is our Fate;
Others say, Law is our State;
Others say, others say
Law is no more
Law has gone away.

And always the loud angry crowd
Very angry and very loud
Law is We,
And always the soft idiot softly Me.

If we, dear, know we know no more
Than they about the law,
If I no more than you
Know what we should and should not do
Except that all agree
Gladly or miserably
That the law is
And that all know this,
If therefore thinking it absurd
To identify Law with some other word,
Unlike so many men
I cannot say Law is again,
No more than they can we suppress
The universal wish to guess
Or slip out of our own position
Into an unconcerned condition.
Although I can at least confine
Your vanity and mine
To stating timidly
A timid similarity,
We shall boast anyway:
Like love I say.

Like love we don't know where or why
Like love we can't compel or fly
Like love we often weep
Like love we seldom keep.

## *Edward Lear*

Left by his friend to breakfast alone on the white
Italian shore, his Terrible Demon arose
Over his shoulder; he wept to himself in the night,
A dirty landscape-painter who hated his nose.

The legions of cruel inquisitive They
Were so many and big like dogs: he was upset
By Germans and boats; affection was miles away:
But guided by tears he successfully reached his Regret.

How prodigious the welcome was. Flowers took his hat
And bore him off to introduce him to the tongs;
The demon's false nose made the table laugh; a cat
Soon had him waltzing madly, let him squeeze her hand;
Words pushed him to the piano to sing comic songs;

And children swarmed to him like settlers. He became a land.

## *The Bonfires*

Look there! The sunk road winding
To the fortified farm.
Listen! The cock's alarm
In the strange valley.

Are we the stubborn athletes;
Are we then to begin
The run between the gin
And bloody falcon?

The horns of the dark squadron
Converging to attack;
The sound behind our back
Of glaciers calving.

In legend all were simple,
And held the straitened spot;
But we in legend not,
Are not simple.

In weakness how much further;
Along what crooked route
By hedgehog's gradual foot,
Or fish's fathom.

Bitter the blue smoke rises
From garden bonfires lit,
To where we burning sit:
Good, if it's thorough,

Leaving no double traitor
In days of luck and heat,
To time the double beat,
At last together.

## *Too Dear, Too Vague*

Love by ambition
Of definition
Suffers partition
And cannot go

From yes to no
For no is not love; no is no
The shutting of a door
The tightening jaw
A conscious sorrow;
And saying yes
Turns love into success,
Views from the rail
Of land and happiness,
Assured of all
The sofas creak
And were this all, love were
But cheek to cheek
And dear to dear.

Voices explain
Love's pleasure and love's pain,
Still tap the knee
And cannot disagree,
Hushed for aggression
Of full confession,
Likeness to likeness
Of each old weakness;
Love is not there
Love has moved to another chair.
Aware already
Of who stands next
And is not vexed
And is not giddy,
Leaves the North in place
With a good grace
And would not gather
Another to another,
Designs his own unhappiness
Foretells his own death and is faithless.

## *Meiosis*

Love had him fast but though he fought for breath
He struggled only to possess Another,
The snare forgotten in the little death,
Till you, the seed to which he was a mother,
That never heard of love, through love was free,
While he within his arms a world was holding,
To take the all-night journey under sea,
Work west and northward, set up building.

Cities and years constricted to your scope,
All sorrow simplified though almost all
Shall be as subtle when you are as tall:
Yet clearly in that 'almost' all his hope
That hopeful falsehood cannot stem with love
The flood on which all move and wish to move.

## *Oxford*

Nature is so near: the rooks in the college garden
Like agile babies still speak the language of feeling;
By the tower the river still runs to the sea and will run,
  And the stones in that tower are utterly
  Satisfied still with their weight.

And the minerals and creatures, so deeply in love with
    their lives
Their sin of accidie excludes all others,
Challenge the nervous students with a careless beauty,
  Setting a single error
  Against their countless faults.

O in these quadrangles where Wisdom honours herself
Does the original stone merely echo that praise
Shallowly, or utter a bland hymn of comfort,
  The founder's equivocal blessing
  On all who worship Success?

Promising to the sharp sword all the glittering prizes,
The cars, the hotels, the service, the boisterous bed,
Then power to silence outrage with a testament,
  The widow's tears forgotten,
  The fatherless unheard.

Whispering to chauffeurs and little girls, to tourists
    and dons,
That Knowledge is conceived in the hot womb of Violence
Who in a late hour of apprehension and exhaustion
  Strains to her weeping breast
  That blue-eyed darling head.

And is that child happy with his box of lucky books
And all the jokes of learning? Birds cannot grieve:
Wisdom is a beautiful bird; but to the wise
  Often, often is it denied
  To be beautiful or good.

Without are the shops, the works, the whole green county
Where a cigarette comforts the guilty and a kiss the weak;
There thousands fidget and poke and spend their money:
  Eros Paidagogos
  Weeps on his virginal bed.

Ah, if that thoughtless almost natural world
Would snatch his sorrow to her loving sensual heart!
But he is Eros and must hate what most he loves;
  And she is of Nature; Nature
  Can only love herself.

And over the talkative city like any other
Weep the non-attached angels. Here too the knowledge
of death
Is a consuming love: And the natural heart refuses
The low unflattering voice
That rests not till it find a hearing.

## *Like a Vocation*

Not as that dream Napoleon, rumour's dread and centre,
Before whose riding all the crowds divide,
Who dedicates a column and withdraws,
Not as that general favourite and breezy visitor
To whom the weather and the ruins mean so much,
Nor as any of those who always will be welcome,
As luck or history or fun,
Do not enter like that: all these depart.

Claim, certainly, the stranger's right to pleasure:
Ambassadors will surely entertain you
With knowledge of operas and men,
Bankers will ask for your opinion
And the heiress' cheek lean ever so slightly towards you,
The mountains and the shopkeepers accept you
And all your walks be free.

But politeness and freedom are never enough,
Not for a life. They lead
Up to a bed that only looks like marriage;
Even the disciplined and distant admiration
For thousands who obviously want nothing
Becomes just a dowdy illness. These have their moderate success;
They exist in the vanishing hour.

But somewhere always, nowhere particularly unusual,
Almost anywhere in the landscape of water and houses,
His crying competing unsuccessfully with the cry
Of the traffic or the birds, is always standing
The one who needs you, that terrified
Imaginative child who only knows you
As what the uncles call a lie,
But knows he has to be the future and that only
The meek inherit the earth, and is neither
Charming, successful, nor a crowd;
Alone among the noise and policies of summer
His weeping climbs towards your life like a vocation.

## *Not All the Candidates Pass*

Now from my window-sill I watch the night,
The church clock's yellow face, the green pier light
Burn for a new imprudent year;
The silence buzzes in my ear;
The jets in both the dormitories are out.

Under the darkness nothing seems to stir;
The lilac bush like a conspirator
Shams dead upon the lawn, and there
Above the flagstaff the Great Bear
Hangs as a portent over Helensburgh.

But deaf to prophecy or China's drum
The blood moves strangely in its moving home,
Diverges, loops, to travel further
Than the long still shadow of the father,
Though to the valley of regret it come.

Now in this season when the ice is loosened,
In scrubbed laboratories research is hastened
And cameras at the growing wood
Are pointed; for the long-lost good
Desire like a police-dog is unfastened.

O Lords of Limit, training dark and light
And setting a tabu 'twixt left and right,
The influential quiet twins
From whom all property begins,
Look leniently upon us all to-night.

Oldest of masters whom the schoolboy fears,
Failing to find his pen or keep back tears,
Collecting stamps or butterflies,
Hoping in some way to appease
The malice of the erratic examiners,

No one has seen you: none can say;—'Of late—
Here. You can see the marks—They lay in wait.'
But in my thoughts to-night you seem
Forms which I saw once in a dream,
The stocky keepers of a wild estate.

With guns beneath your arms, in sun and wet,
At doorways posted or on ridges set,
By copse or bridge we know you there
Whose sleepless presences endear
Our peace to us with a perpetual threat.

We know you moody, silent, sensitive,
Quick to be offended, slow to forgive,
But to your discipline the heart
Submits when we have fallen apart
Into the isolated dishonest life.

Look not too closely, be not over-quick;
We have no invitation, but we are sick,
Using the mole's device, the carriage
Of peacock or rat's desperate courage,
And we shall only pass you by a trick.

At the end of my corridor are boys who dream
Of a new bicycle or winning team;
On their behalf guard all the more
This late-maturing Northern shore,
Who to their serious season must shortly come.

Deeper towards the summer the year moves on.
What if the starving visionary have seen
The carnival within our gates,
Your bodies kicked about the streets,
We need your power still: use it, that none,

O, from their tables break uncontrollably away,
Lunging, insensible to injury,
Dangerous in the room, or out wild-
-ly spinning like a top in the field,
Mopping and mowing through the sleepless day.

## *Pascal*

O had his mother, near her time, been praying
Up to her crucifix and prayed too long?
Until exhausted she grew stiff like wood;
The future of herself hung dangerous and heavy
From her uprightness like a malefactor,
And in a trance she re-negotiated
The martyrdom that even in Auvergne
Would be demanded as the price for life

Knowledge was lifted up on Love but faced
Away from her towards the lives in refuge,
Directed always to the moon-struck jeering neighbours
Who'd grown aware of being watched and come
Uneasily, against their native judgment,
And still were coming up the local paths
From every gate of the protective town
And every crevice of the noon-hot landscape.

None who conceivably could hate him were excluded;
His back was turned on no one but herself
Who had to go on holding him and bear
The terror in their faces as they screamed 'Be Angry,'
The stolid munching of their puzzled animals
Who'd raised their heads from grazing; even ploughs
They'd left behind to see him hurt were noticed;
Nothing in France was disregarded but her worship.

Did then the patient tugging of his will
Not to turn round for comfort shake her faith,
O when she saw the magistrate-in-charge,
The husband who had given him to her look up
Into that fascinating sorrow, and was certain
That even *he* forgot her, did she then deny
The only bond they shared, the right to suffer,
And join the others in a wish to murder?

Whatever happened, he was born deserted
And lonelier than any adult: they at least
Had dwelt in childhoods once where dogs were hopeful
And chairs could fly and doors remove a tyrant;
Even the ablest could recall a day
Of diagnosis when the first stab of his talent
Ran through the beardless boy and spoilt the sadness
Of the closed life the stupid never leave.

However primitive, all others had their ferry
Over the dreadful water to those woods from which,
Irrelevant like flies that win a coward's battle,
The flutes and laughter of the happily diverted
Broke in effectively across his will
To build a life upon original disorder:
How could he doubt the evidence he had
Of Paris and the earth? His misery was real.

All dreams led back into the nightmare garden
Where the great families who should have loved him slept
Loving each other, not a single rose
Dared leave its self-regard, and he alone was kneeling,
Submitting to a night that promised nothing,
Not even punishment, but let him pray;
Prayer bled to death in its abyssal spaces,
Mocked by the silence of their unbelief.

Yet like a lucky orphan he had been discovered
And instantly adopted by a Gift;
And she became the sensible protector
Who found a passage through the caves of accusation,
And even in the canyon of distress was able
To use the echo of his weakness as a proof
That joy was probable and took the place
Of the poor lust and hunger he had never known.

And never told him he was different from the others,
Too weak to face their innocently brutal questions,
Assured him he was stronger than Descartes,
And let him think it was his own finesse
That promised him a miracle, and doubt by doubt
Restored the ruined château of his faith;
Until at last, one Autumn, all was ready:
And in the night the Unexpected came.

The empty was transformed into possession,
The cold burst into flames; creation was on fire
And his weak moment blazing like a bush,
A symptom of the order and the praise;
And he had place like Abraham and Jacob,
And was incapable of evil like a star,
For isolation had been utterly consumed,
And everything that could exist was holy.

All that was really willed would be accomplished:
The crooked custom take its final turning
Into the truth it always meant to reach;
The barrack's filthy oath could not arrest
Its move towards the just, nor flesh annihilate
The love that somewhere every day persuades it,
Brought to a sensual incandescence in the dark,
To do the deed that has made all the saints.

Then it was over. By the morning he was cool,
His faculties for sin restored completely,
And eight years to himself. But round his neck
Now hung a louder cry than the familiar tune
Libido Excellendi whistled as he wrote
The lucid and unfair. And still it rings
Wherever there are children doubt and deserts,
Or cities that exist for mercy and for judgment.

## *Perhaps*

O Love, the interest itself in thoughtless Heaven,
Make simpler daily the beating of man's heart; within,
There in the ring where name and image meet,

Inspire them with such a longing as will make his thought
Alive like patterns a murmuration of starlings,
Rising in joy over wolds, unwittingly weave.

Here too on our little reef display your power,
This fortress perched on the edge of the Atlantic scarp,
The mote between all Europe and the exile-crowded sea;

And make us as *Newton* was who, in his garden watching
The apple falling towards *England*, became aware
Between himself and her of an eternal tie.

For now that dream which so long had contented our will,
I mean, of uniting the dead into a splendid empire,
Under whose fertilizing flood the *Lancashire* moss

Sprouted up chimneys, and *Glamorgan* hid a life
Grim as a tidal rock-pool's in its glove-shaped valleys,
Is already retreating into her maternal shadow;

Leaving the furnaces gasping in the impossible air,
That flotsam at which *Dumbarton* gapes and hungers;
While upon wind-loved *Rowley* no hammer shakes

The cluster of mounds like a midget golf-course, graves
Of some who created these intelligible dangerous marvels,
Affectionate people, but crude their sense of glory.

Far-sighted as falcons, they looked down another future;
For the seed in their loins were hostile though afraid of
their pride,
And, tall with a shadow now, inertly wait.

In bar, in netted chicken-farm, in lighthouse,
Standing on these impoverished constricted acres,
The ladies and gentlemen apart, too much alone,

Consider the years of the measured world begun,
The barren virtuous marriage of stone and water.
Yet O, at this very moment of a hopeless sigh,

When, inland, they are thinking their thoughts but
watching these islands
As children in *Chester* look to *Moel Fammau* to decide
On picnics by the clearness or withdrawal of her
treeless crown.

Some possible dream, long coiled in the ammonite's slumber
Is uncurling, prepared to lay on our talk and reflection
Its military silence, its surgeon's idea of pain;

And out of the future into actual history,
As when *Merlin*, tamer of horses, and his lords to whom
*Stonehenge* was still a thought, the *Pillars* passed

And into the undared ocean swung north their prow,
Drives through the night and star-concealing dawn
For the virgin roadsteads of our hearts an unwavering keel.

## *Casino*

Only the hands are living; to the wheel attracted,
Are moved as deer trek desperately towards a creek
Through the dust and scrub of the desert, or gently
As sunflowers turn to the light.

And, as the night takes up the cries of feverish children,
The cravings of lions in dens, the loves of dons,
Gathers them all and remains the night, the
Great room is full of their prayers

To the last feast of isolation self-invited
They flock, and in the rite of disbelief are joined;
  From numbers all their stars are recreated,
  The enchanted, the world, the sad.

Without, the rivers flow among the wholly living,
Quite near their trysts; and the mountains part them; and
    the bird
  Deep in the greens and moistures of summer
  Sings towards their work.

But here no nymph comes naked to the youngest shepherd;
The fountain is deserted; the laurel will not grow;
  The labyrinth is safe but endless, and broken
  Is Ariadne's thread.

As deeper in these hands is grooved their fortune: 'Lucky
Were few, and it is possible that none was loved;
  And what was godlike in this generation
  Was never to be born.'

## *Such Nice People*

On Sunday walks
Past the shut gates of works
The conquerors come
And are handsome.

Sitting all day
By the open window
Say what they say
Know what to know
Who brought and taught
Unusual images
And new tunes to old cottages,

With so much done
Without a thought
Of the anonymous lampoon
The cellar counterplot,
Though in the night

Pursued by eaters
They clutch at gaiters
That straddle and deny
Escape that way,
Though in the night
Is waking fright.

Father by son
Lives on and on
Though over date
And motto on the gate
The lichen grows
From year to year,
Still here and there
That Roman nose
Is noticed in the villages
And father's son
Knows what they said
And what they did.

Not meaning to deceive,
Wish to give suck
Enforces make-believe
And what was fear
Of fever and bad-luck
Is now a scare
At certain names
A need for charms
For certain words
At certain fords,

And what was livelihood
Is tallness, strongness,
Words and longness,
All glory and all story,
Solemn and not so good.

## *Our Hunting Fathers*

Our hunting fathers told the story
  Of the sadness of the creatures,
Pitied the limits and the lack
  Set in their finished features;
Saw in the lion's intolerant look,
Behind the quarry's dying glare,
Love raging for the personal glory
  That reason's gift would add,
The liberal appetite and power,
  The rightness of a god.

Who, nurtured in that fine tradition,
  Predicted the result,
Guessed Love by nature suited to
  The intricate ways of guilt,
That human ligaments could so
His southern gestures modify
And make it his mature ambition
  To think no thought but ours,
To hunger, work illegally,
  And be anonymous?

# *A Summer Night 1933*

(*To Geoffrey Hoyland*)

Out on the lawn I lie in bed,
Vega conspicuous overhead
  In the windless nights of June,
As congregated leaves complete
Their day's activity; my feet
  Point to the rising moon.

Lucky, this point in time and space
Is chosen as my working-place,
  Where the sexy airs of summer,
The bathing hours and the bare arms,
The leisured drives through a land of farms
  Are good to the newcomer.

Equal with colleagues in a ring
I sit on each calm evening
  Enchanted as the flowers
The opening lights draws out of hiding
With all its gradual dove-like pleading,
  Its logic and its powers

That later we, though parted then,
May still recall these evenings when
  Fear gave his watch no look;
The lion griefs loped from the shade
And on our knees their muzzles laid,
  And Death put down his book

Now north and south and east and west
Those I love lie down to rest;
  The moon looks on them all,

The healers and the brilliant talkers
The eccentrics and the silent walkers,
  The dumpy and the tall.

She climbs the European sky,
Churches and power-station lie
  Alike among earth's fixtures:
Into the galleries she peers
And blankly as a butcher stares
  Upon the marvellous pictures

To gravity attentive, she
Can notice nothing here, though we
  Whom hunger does not move,
From gardens where we feel secure
Look up and with a sigh endure
  The tyrannies of love:

And, gentle, do not care to know,
Where Poland draws her eastern bow,
  What violence is done,
Nor ask what doubtful act allows
Our freedom in this English house,
  Our picnics in the sun.

Soon, soon, through dykes of our content
The crumpling flood will force a rent
  And, taller than a tree,
Hold sudden death before our eyes
Whose river dreams long hid the size
  And vigours of the sea.

But when the waters make retreat
And through the black mud first the wheat
  In shy green stalks appears,

When stranded monsters gasping lie,
And sounds of riveting terrify
  Their whorled unsubtle ears,

May these delights we dread to lose,
This privacy, need no excuse
  But to that strength belong,
As through a child's rash happy cries
The drowned parental voices rise
  In unlamenting song.

After discharges of alarm
All unpredicted let them calm
  The pulse of nervous nations,
Forgive the murderer in his glass,
Tough in their patience to surpass
  The tigress her swift motions.

## *Epitaph on a Tyrant*

Perfection, of a kind, was what he was after,
And the poetry he invented was easy to understand;
He knew human folly like the back of his hand,
And was greatly interested in armies and fleets;
When he laughed, respectable senators burst with laughter,
And when he cried the little children died in the streets.

## *The Prophets*

Perhaps I always knew what they were saying:
Even the early messengers who walked
Into my life from books where they were staying,
Those beautiful machines that never talked

But let the small boy worship them and learn
All their long names whose hardness made him proud;
Love was the word they never said aloud
As something that a picture can't return.

And later when I hunted the Good Place,
Abandoned lead-mines let themselves be caught;
There was no pity in the adit's face,
The rusty winding-engine never taught
One obviously too apt, to say Too Late:
Their lack of shyness was a way of praising
Just what I didn't know, why I was gazing,
While all their lack of answer whispered 'Wait,'
And taught me gradually without coercion,
And all the landscape round them pointed to
The calm with which they took complete desertion
As proof that you existed.

It was true.
For now I have the answer from the face
That never will go back into a book
But asks for all my life, and is the Place
Where all I touch is moved to an embrace,
And there is no such thing as a vain look.

## *The Capital*

Quarter of pleasures where the rich are always waiting,
Waiting expensively for miracles to happen,
O little restaurant where the lovers eat each other,
Café where exiles have established a malicious village;

You with your charm and your apparatus have abolished
The strictness of winter and the spring's compulsion;
Far from your lights the outraged punitive father,
The dullness of mere obedience here is apparent.

Yet with orchestras and glances, O, you betray us
To belief in our infinite powers; and the innocent
Unobservant offender falls in a moment
Victim to the heart's invisible furies.

In unlighted streets you hide away the appalling;
Factories where lives are made for a temporary use
Like collars or chairs, rooms where the lonely are battered
Slowly like pebbles into fortuitous shapes.

But the sky you illumine, your glow is visible far
Into the dark countryside, the enormous, the frozen,
Where, hinting at the forbidden like a wicked uncle,
Night after night to the farmer's children you beckon.

## *Shut Your Eyes and Open Your Mouth*

Sentries against inner and outer,
At stated interval is feature;
And how shall enemy on these
Make sudden raid or lasting peace?
For bribery were vain to try
Against the incorruptible eye
Too amply paid with tears, the chin
Has hairs to hide its weakness in,
And proud bridge and indignant nostril
Nothing to do but to look noble.
But in between these lies the mouth;
Watch that, that you may parley with:
There strategy comes easiest,
Though it seem stern, was seen compressed
Over a lathe, refusing answer,
It will release the ill-fed prisoner
It will do murder or betray

For either party equally,
Yielding at last to a close kiss
It will admit tongue's soft advance,
So longed for, given in abandon,
Given long since, had it but known.

## *Heavy Date*

Sharp and silent in the
Clear October lighting
Of a Sunday morning
  The great city lies;
And I at a window
Looking over water
At the world of Business
  With a lover's eyes.

All mankind, I fancy,
When anticipating
Anything exciting
  Like a rendezvous,
Occupy the time in
Purely random thinking,
For when love is waiting
  Logic will not do.

Much as he would like to
Concentrate completely
On the precious Object,
  Love has not the power:
Goethe put it neatly;
No one cares to watch the
Loveliest sunset after
  Quarter of an hour.

Malinowski, Rivers,
Benedict and others
Show how common culture
  Shapes the separate lives:
Matrilineal races
Kill their mothers' brothers
In their dreams and turn their
  Sisters into wives.

Who when looking over
Faces in the subway,
Each with its uniqueness,
  Would not, did he dare,
Ask what forms exactly
Suited to their weakness
Love and desperation
  Take to govern there.

Would not like to know what
Influence occupation
Has on human vision
  Of the human fate:
Do all clerks for instance
Pigeon-hole creation,
Brokers see the Ding-an-
  -sich as Real Estate?

When a politician
Dreams about his sweetheart,
Does he multiply her
  Face into a crowd,
Are her fond responses
All-or-none reactions,
Does he try to buy her,
  Is the kissing loud?

Strange are love's mutations:
Thus, the early poem
Of the flesh sub rosa
  Has been known to grow
Now and then into the
Amor intellectu-
-alis of Spinoza;
  How we do not know.

Slowly we are learning,
We at least know this much,
That we have to unlearn
  Much that we were taught,
And are growing chary
Of emphatic dogmas;
Love like Matter is much
  Odder than we thought.

Love requires an Object,
But this varies so much,
Almost, I imagine,
  Anything will do:
When I was a child, I
Loved a pumping-engine,
Thought it every bit as
  Beautiful as you.

Love has no position,
Love's a way of living,
One kind of relation
  Possible between
Any things or persons
Given one condition,
The one sine qua non
  Being mutual need.

Through it we discover
An essential secret
Called by some Salvation
  And by some Success;
Crying for the moon is
Naughtiness and envy,
We can only love what-
  -ever we possess.

I believed for years that
Love was the conjunction
Of two oppositions;
  That was all untrue;
Every young man fears that
He is not worth loving:
Bless you, darling, I have
  Found myself in you.

When two lovers meet, then
There's an end of writing
Thought and Analytics:
  Lovers, like the dead,
In their loves are equal;
Sophomores and peasants,
Poets and their critics
  Are the same in bed.

## *Venus Will Now Say a Few Words*

Since you are going to begin to-day
Let us consider what it is you do.
You are the one whose part it is to lean,
For whom it is not good to be alone.
Laugh warmly turning shyly in the hall

Or climb with bare knees the volcanic hill,
Acquire that flick of wrist and after strain
Relax in your darling's arms like a stone
Remembering everything you can confess,
Making the most of firelight, of hours of fuss;
But joy is mine not yours—to have come so far,
Whose cleverest invention was lately fur;
Lizards my best once who took years to breed,
Could not control the temperature of blood.
To reach that shape for your face to assume,
Pleasure to many and despair to some,
I shifted ranges, lived epochs handicapped
By climate, wars, or what the young men kept,
Modified theories on the types of dross,
Altered desire and history of dress.

You in the town now call the exile fool
That writes home once a year as last leaves fall,
Think—Romans had a language in their day
And ordered roads with it, but it had to die:
Your culture can but leave—forgot as sure
As place-name origins in favourite shire—
Jottings for stories, some often-mentioned Jack,
And references in letters to a private joke,
Equipment rusting in unweeded lanes,
Virtues still advertised on local lines;
And your conviction shall help none to fly,
Cause rather a perversion on next floor.

Nor even is despair your own, when swiftly
Comes general assault on your ideas of safety:
That sense of famine, central anguish felt
For goodness wasted at peripheral fault,
Your shutting up the house and taking prow
To go into the wilderness to pray,

Means that I wish to leave and to pass on,
Select another form, perhaps your son;
Though he reject you, join opposing team
Be late or early at another time,
My treatment will not differ—he will be tipped,
Found weeping, signed for, made to answer, topped.
Do not imagine you can abdicate;
Before you reach the frontier you are caught;
Others have tried it and will try again
To finish that which they did not begin:
Their fate must always be the same as yours,
To suffer the loss they were afraid of, yes,
Holders of one position, wrong for years.

## *Petition*

Sir, no man's enemy, forgiving all
But will its negative inversion, be prodigal:
Send to us power and light, a sovereign touch
Curing the intolerable neural itch,
The exhaustion of weaning, the liar's quinsy,
And the distortions of ingrown virginity.
Prohibit sharply the rehearsed response
And gradually correct the coward's stance;
Cover in time with beams those in retreat
That, spotted, they turn though the reverse were great;
Publish each healer that in city lives
Or country houses at the end of drives;
Harrow the house of the dead; look shining at
New styles of architecture, a change of heart.

# *Dover 1937*

Steep roads, a tunnel through the downs are the approaches;
A ruined pharos overlooks a constructed bay;
The sea-front is almost elegant; all this show
Has, somewhere inland, a vague and dirty root:
Nothing is made in this town.

But the dominant Norman castle floodlit at night
And the trains that fume in the station built on the sea
Testify to the interests of its regular life:
Here live the experts on what the soldiers want
And who the travellers are,

Whom the ships carry in and out between the lighthouses
That guard for ever the made privacy of this bay
Like twin stone dogs opposed on a gentleman's gate:
Within these breakwaters English is spoken; without
Is the immense improbable atlas.

The eyes of the departing migrants are fixed on the sea,
To conjure their special fates from the impersonal water:
'I see an important decision made on a lake,
An illness, a beard, Arabia found in a bed,
Nanny defeated, Money'.

And filled with the tears of the beaten or calm with fame,
The eyes of the returning thank the historical cliffs:
'The heart has at last ceased to lie, and the clock to accuse;
In the shadow under the yew, at the children's party
Everything will be explained'.

And the old town with its keep and its Georgian houses
Has built its routine upon these unusual moments;
The vows, the tears, the slight emotional signals
Are here eternal and unremarkable gestures
Like ploughing or soldiers' songs:

Soldiers who swarm in the pubs in their pretty clothes,
As fresh and silly as girls from a high-class academy:
The Lion, the Rose or the Crown will not ask them to die,
Not here, not now. All they are killing is time,
Their pauper civilian future.

Above them, expensive and lovely as a rich child's toy,
The aeroplanes fly in the new European air,
On the edge of that air that makes England of
minor importance;
And the tides warn bronzing bathers of a cooling star,
With half its history done.

High over France the full moon, cold and exciting
Like one of those dangerous flatterers one meets and loves
When one is very unhappy, returns the human stare:
The night has many recruits; for thousands of pilgrims
The Mecca is coldness of heart.

And the cry of the gulls at dawn is sad like work:
The soldier guards the traveller who pays for the soldier;
Each one prays in the dusk for himself and neither
Controls the years. Some are temporary heroes:
Some of these people are happy.

## *Taller To-day*

Taller to-day, we remember similar evenings,
Walking together in the windless orchard
Where the brook runs over the gravel, far from the glacier.

Again in the room with the sofa hiding the grate,
Look down to the river when the rain is over,
See him turn to the window, hearing our last
Of Captain Ferguson.

It is seen how excellent hands have turned to commonness.
One staring too long, went blind in a tower,
One sold all his manors to fight, broke through, and faltered.

Nights come bringing the snow, and the dead howl
Under the headlands in their windy dwelling
Because the Adversary put too easy questions
On lonely roads.

But happy now, though no nearer each other,
We see the farms lighted all along the valley;
Down at the mill-shed the hammering stops
And men go home.

Noises at dawn will bring
Freedom for some, but not this peace
No bird can contradict: passing, but is sufficient now
For something fulfilled this hour, loved or endured.

## *Two Worlds*

The chimneys are smoking, the crocus is out in the border;
The mountain ranges are massive in the blue March day;
Like a sea god the political orator lands at the pier;
But, O, my magnet, my pomp, my beauty
More telling to heart than the sea,
Than Europe or my own home town
To-day is parted from me
And I stand on our world alone.

Over the town now, in for an hour from the desert
A hawk looks down on us all; he is not in this;
Our kindness is hid from the eye of the vivid creature;

Sees only the configuration of field,
Copse, chalk-pit, and fallow,
The distribution of forces,
The play of sun and shadow
On upturned faces.

For the game is in progress which tends to become like a war,
The contest of the Whites with the Reds for the carried thing
Divided in secret among us, a portion to each;
That power which gave us our lives
Gave us, we found when we met,
Out of the complex to be reassembled
Pieces that fit,
Whereat with love we trembled.

Last week we embraced on the dunes and thought they were pleased;
Now lake and holes in the mountains remind us of error,
Strolling in the valley we are uncertain of the trees:
Their shadow falls upon us;
Are they spies on the human heart
Motionless, tense in the hope
Of catching us out? Are they hostile, apart
From the belovèd group?

For our hour of unity makes us aware of two worlds:
That was revealed to us then in our double-shadow,
Which for the masters of harbours, the colliers, and us,
For our calculating star,
Where the divided feel
Tears in their eyes
And time and doctors heal,
Eternally sighs.

Yes, the white death, friendless, has his own idea of us;
We're something far more exciting than just friends.
He has his private saga he tells himself at night,
Which starts with the handsome couple
Estranged by a mistake,
Follows their lifetime curses,
Ends with the fruitless rescue from the lake,
Their death-bed kisses.

Then lightly, my darling, leave me and slip away
Playful, betraying him nothing, allaying suspicion:
His eye is on all these people about us, leading
Their quiet horrified lives,
But if we can trust we are free,
Though alone among those
Who within the earshot of the ungovernable sea
Grow set in their ways.

We ride a turning globe, we stand on a star;
It has thrust us up together; it is stronger than we.
In it our separate sorrows are a single hope,
It's in its nature always to appear
Behind us as we move
With linked arms through our dreams,
Wherefore, apart, we love
Its sundering streams.

And since our desire cannot take that route which is straightest,
Let us choose the crooked, so implicating these acres,
These millions in whom already the wish to be one
Like a burglar is stealthily moving,
That these, on the new façade of a bank
Employed, or conferring at health resort,
May, by circumstances linked,
More clearly act our thought.

Then dance, the boatmen, virgins, camera-men and us
Round goal-post, wind-gauge, pylon or bobbing buoy;
For our joy abounding is, though it hide underground,
As insect or camouflaged cruiser
For fear of death sham dead,
Is quick, is real, is quick to answer
The bird-like sucking tread
Of the quick dancer.

## *Through the Looking Glass*

The earth turns over; our side feels the cold;
And life sinks choking in the wells of trees:
The ticking heart comes to a standstill, killed;
The icing on the pond waits for the boys.
Among the holly and the gifts I move,
The carols on the piano, the glowing hearth,
All on traditional sympathy with birth,
Put by your challenge to the shifts of Love.

Your portrait hangs before me on the wall,
And there what view I wish for I shall find,
The wooded or the stony, though not all
The painter's gifts can make its flatness round;
Though each blue iris see the heaven of failures,
That mirror world where Logic is reversed,
Where age becomes the handsome child at last,
The glass sea parted for the country sailors

There move the enormous comics, drawn from life—
My father as an Airedale and a gardener,
My mother chasing letters with a knife.
You are not present as a character;
(Only the family have speaking parts).

You are a valley or a river-bend,
The one an aunt refers to as a friend,
The tree from which the weasel racing starts.

Behind me roars the other world it matches,
Love's daytime kingdom which I say you rule,
His total state where all must wear your badges
Keep order perfect as a naval school.
Noble emotions, organized and massed,
Line the straight flood-lit tracks of memory
To cheer your image as it flashes by,
All lust at once informed on and suppressed.

Yours is the only name expressive there,
And family affection speaks in cypher.
Lay-out of hospital and street and square
That comfort to its homesick children offer,
As I, their author, stand between these dreams,
Unable to choose either for a home,
Your would-be lover who has never come
In the great bed at midnight to your arms

Such dreams are amorous; they are indeed:
But no one but myself is loved in these,
While time flies on above the dreamer's head,
Flies on, flies on, and with your beauty flies,
And pride succeeds to each succeeding state,
Still able to buy up the life within,
License no liberty except his own,
Order the fireworks after the defeat.

Language of moderation cannot hide:—
My sea is empty and its waves are rough;
Gone from the map the shore where childhood played,
Tight-fisted as a peasant, eating love;

Lost in my wake the archipelago,
Islands of self through which I sailed all day
Planting a pirate's flag, a generous boy;
And lost the way to action and to you.

Lost if I steer. Tempest and tide may blow
Sailor and ship past the illusive reef,
And I yet land to celebrate with you
The birth of natural order and true love:
With you enjoy the untransfigured scene,
My father down the garden in his gaiters,
My mother at her bureau writing letters,
Free to our favours, all our titles gone.

## *The Lesson**

The first time that I dreamed, we were in flight,
And fagged with running; there was civil war,
A valley full of thieves and wounded bears.

Farms blazed behind us; turning to the right,
We came at once to a tall house, its door
Wide open, waiting for its long-lost heirs.

An elderly clerk sat on the bedroom stairs
Writing; but we had tiptoed past him when
He raised his head and stuttered—'Go away'.
We wept and begged to stay:
He wiped his pince-nez, hesitated, then
Said no, he had no power to give us leave;
Our lives were not in order; we must leave.

* * *

The second dream began in a May wood;
We had been laughing; your blue eyes were kind,
Your excellent nakedness without disdain.

Our lips met, wishing universal good;
But on their impact sudden flame and wind
Fetched you away and turned me loose again

To make a focus for a wide wild plain,
Dead level and dead silent and bone dry,
Where nothing could have suffered, sinned, or grown.
On a high chair alone
I sat, a little master, asking why
The cold and solid object in my hands
Should be a human hand, one of your hands.

* * *

And the last dream was this: we were to go
To a great banquet and a Victory Ball
After some tournament or dangerous test.

Only our seats had velvet cushions, so
We must have won; though there were crowns for all,
Ours were of gold, of paper all the rest.

O fair or funny was each famous guest.
Love smiled at Courage over priceless glass,
And rockets died in hundreds to express
Our learned carelessness.
A band struck up; all over the green grass
A sea of paper crowns rose up to dance:
Ours were too heavy; we did not dance.

* * *

I woke. You were not there. But as I dressed
Anxiety turned to shame, feeling all three
Intended one rebuke. For had not each
In its own way tried to teach
My will to love you that it cannot be,
As I think, of such consequence to want
What anyone is given, if they want?

## *Our Bias*

The hour-glass whispers to the lion's paw,
The clock-towers tell the gardens day and night,
How many errors Time has patience for,
How wrong they are in being always right.

Yet Time, however loud its chimes or deep,
However fast its falling torrent flows,
Has never put the lion off his leap
Nor shaken the assurance of the rose.

For they, it seems, care only for success:
While we choose words according to their sound
And judge a problem by its awkwardness;

And Time with us was always popular.
When have we not preferred some going round
To going straight to where we are?

## *Christmas 1940**

The journals give the quantities of wrong,
Where the impatient massacre took place,
How many and what sort it caused to die,
But, O, what finite integers express
The realm of malice where these facts belong?
How can the mind make sense, bombarded by
A stream of incompatible mishaps,
The bloom and buzz of a confessed collapse?

What properties define our person since
This massive vagueness moved in on our lives,
What laws require our substance to exist?

Our strands of private order are dissolved
And lost our routes to self-inheritance,
Position and Relation are dismissed,
An epoch's Providence is quite worn out,
The lion of Nothing chases about.

'Beware! Beware! The Great Boyg has you down,'
Some deeper instinct in revulsion cries,
'The Void desires to have you for its creature,
A doll through whom It may ventriloquise
Its vast resentment as your very own,
Because Negation has nor form nor feature,
And all Its lust to power is impotent
Unless the actual It hates consent.

The universe of pure extension where
Nothing except the universe was lonely,
For Promise was occluded in its womb
Where the immortal families had only
To fall to pieces and accept repair,
Their nursery, their commonplace, their tomb,
All acts accessory to their position,
Died when the first plant made its apparition.

Through a long adolescence, then, the One
Slept in the sadness of its disconnected
Aggressive creatures—as a latent wish
The local genius of the rose protected,
Or an unconscious irony within
The independent structure of the fish;
But Flesh grew weaker, stronger grew the Word,
Until on earth the Great Exchange occurred.

Now to maturity must crawl that child
In whom the old equations are reversed
For that is cause which was effect before,

Now he must learn for what he has been nursed
That through his self-annulment the real world
Of self-enduring instants may endure
Its final metamorphosis and pass
Into visibility at last.'

The sacred auras fade from well and wood,
The great geometries enclose our lives
In fields of normal enmity no more,
The definitions and the narratives
Are insufficient for our solitude,
Venus cannot predict our passion, nor
The Dioscuri plant their olive trees
To guide us through the ambiguities.

And winds of terror force us to confess
The settled world of past events has not
A faiblesse any longer for the dull
To swim in like an aqueous habitat;
We are reduced to our true nakedness:
Either we serve the Unconditional,
Or some Hitlerian monster will supply
An iron convention to do evil by.

O beggar, bigwig, mugwump, none but have
Some vision of that holy centre where
All time's occasions are refreshed; the lost
Are met by all the other places there,
The rival errors recognize their love,
Fall weeping on each other's neck at last;
The rich need not confound the Persons, nor
The Substance be divided by the poor.

It is the vision that objectifies:
Only its Roman rigour can bestow
On earth and sea 'la douceur angevine',

Only its prayer can make the children grow,
Only its trembling can externalize
The bland Horatian life of friends and wine;
It is the tension of its inner dread
That moulds the beautiful patrician head.

Our way remains, our world, our day, our sin;
We may, as always, by our own consent
Be cast away: but neither depth nor height
Nor any other creature can prevent
Our reasonable and lively motions in
This modern void where only Love has weight,
And Fate by Faith is freely understood,
And he who works shall find our Fatherhood.

## *Rimbaud*

The nights, the railway-arches, the bad sky,
His horrible companions did not know it;
But in that child the rhetorician's lie
Burst like a pipe: the cold had made a poet.

Drinks bought him by his weak and lyric friend
His senses systematically deranged,
To all accustomed nonsense put an end;
Till he from lyre and weakness was estranged.

Verse was a special illness of the ear;
Integrity was not enough; that seemed
The hell of childhood: he must try again.

Now, galloping through Africa, he dreamed
Of a new self, the son, the engineer,
His truth acceptable to lying men.

## *The Decoys*

There are some birds in these valleys
Who flutter round the careless
With intimate appeal,
By seeming kindness trained to snaring,
They feel no falseness.

Under the spell completely
They circle can serenely,
And in the tricky light
The masked hill has a purer greenness.
Their flight looks fleeter.

But fowlers, O, like foxes,
Lie ambushed in the rushes.
Along the harmless tracks
The madman keeper crawls through brushwood,
Axe under oxter.

Alas, the signal given,
Fingers on trigger tighten.
The real unlucky dove
Must smarting fall away from brightness
Its love from living.

## *Like Us*

These had stopped seeking
But went on speaking,
Have not contributed.
But have diluted.

These ordered light
But had no right,
And handed on
War and a son

Wishing no harm.
But to be warm
These went to sleep
On the burning heap.

## *Leap Before You Look**

The sense of danger must not disappear:
The way is certainly both short and steep,
However gradual it looks from here;
Look if you like, but you will have to leap.

Tough-minded men get mushy in their sleep
And break the by-laws any fool can keep;
It is not the convention but the fear
That has a tendency to disappear.

The worried efforts of the busy heap,
The dirt, the imprecision, and the beer
Produce a few smart wisecracks every year;
Laugh if you can, but you will have to leap.

The clothes that are considered right to wear
Will not be either sensible or cheap,
So long as we consent to live like sheep
And never mention those who disappear.

Much can be said for social savoir-faire,
But to rejoice when no one else is there

Is even harder than it is to weep;
No one is watching, but you have to leap.

A solitude ten thousand fathoms deep
Sustains the bed on which we lie, my dear:
Although I love you, you will have to leap;
Our dream of safety has to disappear.

## *In Memory of Ernst Toller*

(*d. May* 1939)

The shining neutral summer has no voice
To judge America, or ask how a man dies;
And the friends who are sad and the enemies who rejoice

Are chased by their shadows lightly away from the grave
Of one who was egotistical and brave,
Lest they should learn without suffering how to forgive.

What was it, Ernst, that your shadow unwittingly said?
O did the child see something horrid in the woodshed
Long ago? Or had the Europe which took refuge in your head

Already been too injured to get well?
O for how long, like the swallows in that other cell,
Had the bright little longings been flying in to tell

About the big and friendly death outside,
Where people do not occupy or hide;
No towns like Munich; no need to write?

Dear Ernst, lie shadowless at last among
The other war-horses who existed till they'd done
Something that was an example to the young.

We are lived by powers we pretend to understand:
They arrange our loves; it is they who direct at the end
The enemy bullet, the sickness, or even our hand.

It is their to-morrow hangs over the earth of the living
And all that we wish for our friends: but existence is believing
We know for whom we mourn and who is grieving.

## *Happy Ending*

The silly fool, the silly fool
Was sillier in school
But beat the bully as a rule.

The youngest son, the youngest son
Was certainly no wise one
Yet could surprise one.

Or rather, or rather
To be posh, we gather,
One should have no father.

Simple to prove
That deeds indeed
In life succeed
But love in love
And tales in tales
Where no one fails.

## *At the Grave of Henry James**

The snow, less intransigeant than their marble,
Has left the defence of whiteness to these tombs;
For all the pools at my feet

Accommodate blue now, and echo such clouds as occur
To the sky, and whatever bird or mourner the passing
  Moment remarks they repeat

While the rocks, named after singular spaces
Within which images wandered once that caused
  All to tremble and offend,
Stand here in an innocent stillness, each marking the spot
Where one more series of errors lost its uniqueness
  And novelty came to an end.

To whose real advantage were such transactions
When words of reflection were exchanged for trees?
  What living occasion can
Be just to the absent? O noon but reflects on itself,
And the small taciturn stone that is the only witness
  To a great and talkative man

Has no more judgment than my ignorant shadow
Of odious comparisons or distant clocks
  Which challenge and interfere
With the heart's instantaneous reading of time, time that is
A warm enigma no longer in you for whom I
  Surrender my private cheer

Startling the awkward footsteps of my apprehension,
The flushed assault of your recognition is
  The *donnée* of this doubtful hour:
O stern proconsul of intractable provinces,
O poet of the difficult, dear addicted artist,
  Assent to my soil and flower.

As I stand awake on our solar fabric,
That primary machine, the earth, which gendarmes, banks,
  And aspirin pre-suppose.

On which the clumsy and sad may all sit down, and any
who will
Say their a-ha to the beautiful, the common locus
Of the master and the rose.

Our theatre, scaffold, and erotic city
Where all the infirm species are partners in the act
Of encroachment bodies crave,
Though solitude in death is *de rigueur* for their flesh
And the self-denying hermit flies as it approaches
Like the carnivore to a cave.

That its plural numbers may unite in meaning,
Its vulgar tongues unravel the knotted mass
Of the improperly conjunct,
Open my eyes now to all its hinted significant forms,
Sharpen my ears to detect amid its brilliant uproar
The low thud of the defunct.

O dwell, ironic at my living centre,
Half ancestor, half child; because the actual self
Round whom time revolves so fast
Is so afraid of what its motions might possibly do
That the actor is never there when his really important
Acts happen. Only the past

Is present, no one about but the dead as,
Equipped with a few inherited odds and ends,
One after another we are
Fired into life to seek that unseen target where all
Our equivocal judgments are judged and resolved in
One whole Alas or Hurrah.

And only the unborn remark the disaster
When, though it makes no difference to the pretty airs
The bird of Appetite sings,

And Amour Propre is his usual amusing self,
Out from the jungle of an undistinguished moment
  The flexible shadow springs.

Now more than ever, when torches and snare-drum
Excite the squat women of the saurian brain
  Till a milling mob of fears
Breaks in insultingly on anywhere, when in our dreams
Pigs play on the organs and the blue sky runs shrieking
  As the Crack of Doom appears,

Are the good ghosts needed with the white magic
Of their subtle loves. War has no ambiguities
  Like a marriage; the result
Required of its *affaire fatale* is simple and sad,
The physical removal of all human objects
  That conceal the Difficult.

Then remember me that I may remember
The test we have to learn to shudder for is not
  An historical event,
That neither the low democracy of a nightmare nor
An army's primitive tidiness may deceive me
  About our predicament.

That catastrophic situation which neither
Victory nor defeat can annul; to be
  Deaf yet determined to sing,
To be lame and blind yet burning for the Great Good Place,
To be radically corrupt yet mournfully attracted
  By the Real Distinguished Thing.

And shall I not specially bless you as, vexed with
My little inferior questions, to-day I stand
  Beside the bed where you rest

Who opened such passionate arms to your *Bon* when It ran
Towards you with its overwhelming reasons pleading
All beautifully in Its breast?

O with what innocence your hand submitted
To these formal rules that help a child to play,
While your heart, fastidious as
A delicate nun, remained true to the rare noblesse
Of your lucid gift and, for its own sake, ignored the
Resentful muttering Mass.

Whose ruminant hatred of all which cannot
Be simplified or stolen is still at large;
No death can assuage its lust
To vilify the landscape of Distinction and see
The heart of the Personal brought to a systolic standstill,
The Tall to diminished dust.

Preserve me, Master, from its vague incitement;
Yours be the disciplinary image that holds
Me back from agreeable wrong
And the clutch of eddying muddle, lest Proportion shed
The alpine chill of her shrugging editorial shoulder
On my loose impromptu song.

Suggest; so may I segregate my disorder
Into districts of prospective value: approve;
Lightly, lightly, then, may I dance
Over the frontier of the obvious and fumble no more
In the old limp pocket of the minor exhibition,
Nor riot with irrelevance.

And no longer shoe geese or water stakes, but
Bolt in my day my grain of truth to the barn
Where tribulations may leap

With their long-lost brothers at last in the festival
Of which not one has a dissenting image, and the
  Flushed immediacy sleep.

Into this city from the shining lowlands
Blows a wind that whispers of uncovered skulls
  And fresh ruins under the moon,
Of hopes that will not survive the *secousse* of this spring
Of blood and flames, of the terror that walks by night and
  The sickness that strikes at noon.

All will be judged. Master of nuance and scruple,
Pray for me and for all writers living or dead;
  Because there are many whose works
Are in better taste than their lives; because there is no end
To the vanity of our calling: make intercession
  For the treason of all clerks.

Because the darkness is never so distant,
And there is never much time for the arrogant
  Spirit to flutter its wings,
Or the broken bone to rejoice, or the cruel to cry
For Him whose property is always to have mercy, the author
  And giver of all good things.

## *The Ship*

The streets are brightly lit; our city is kept clean:
The third class have the greasiest cards, the first play high;
The beggars sleeping in the bows have never seen
What can be done in staterooms; no one asks why.

Lovers are writing letters, sportsmen playing ball;
One doubts the honour, one the beauty, of his wife;

A boy's ambitious; perhaps the captain hates us all;
Someone perhaps is leading the civilized life.

It is our culture that with such calm progresses
Over the barren plains of a sea; somewhere ahead
The septic East, a war, new flowers and new dresses.

Somewhere a strange and shrewd To-morrow goes to bed
Planning the test for men from Europe; no one guesses
Who will be most ashamed, who richer, and who dead.

## *Family Ghosts*

The strings' excitement, the applauding drum
Are but the initiating ceremony
That out of cloud the ancestral face may come.

And never hear their subaltern mockery,
Graffiti-writers, moss-grown with whimsies,
Loquacious when the watercourse is dry.

It is your face I see, and morning's praise
Of you is ghost's approval of the choice,
Filtered through roots of the effacing grass.

Fear, taking me aside, would give advice
'To conquer her, the visible enemy,
It is enough to turn away the eyes.'

Yet there's no peace in this assaulted city
But speeches at the corners, hope for news,
Outside the watchfires of a stronger army.

And all emotions to expression came,
Recovering the archaic imagery:
This longing for assurance takes the form

Of a hawk's vertical stooping from the sky;
These tears, salt for a disobedient dream,
The lunatic agitation of the sea;

While this despair with hardened eyeballs cries
'A Golden Age, a Silver . . . rather this,
Massive and taciturn years, the Age of Ice'.

## *The Creatures*

They are our past and our future: the poles between which our desire unceasingly is discharged.

A desire in which love and hatred so perfectly oppose themselves that we cannot voluntarily move; but await the extraordinary compulsion of the deluge and the earthquake.

Their affections and indifferences have been a guide to all reformers and tyrants.

Their appearances amid our dreams of machinery have brought a vision of nude and fabulous epochs.

O Pride so hostile to our Charity.

But what their pride has retained, we may by charity more generously recover.

## *A Healthy Spot**

They're nice—one would never dream of going over
Any contract of theirs with a magnifying
Glass, or of locking up one's letters—also
Kind and efficient—one gets what one asks for.
Just what is wrong, then, that, living among them,

One is constantly struck by the number of
Happy marriages and unhappy people?
They attend all the lectures on Post-War Problems,
For they do mind, they honestly want to help; yet,
As they notice the earth in their morning papers,
What sense do they make of its folly and horror
Who have never, one is convinced, felt a sudden
Desire to torture the cat or do a strip-tease
In a public place? Have they ever, one wonders,
Wanted so much to see a unicorn, even
A dead one? Probably. But they won't say so,
Ignoring by tacit consent our hunger
For eternal life, that caged rebuked question
Occasionally let out at clambakes or
College reunions, and which the smoke-room story
Alone, ironically enough, stands up for.

## *Like A Dream*

This lunar beauty
Has no history,
Is complete and early;
If beauty later
Bear any feature,
It had a lover
And is another.

This like a dream
Keeps other time,
And daytime is
The loss of this;
For time is inches
And the heart's changes,
Where ghost has haunted
Lost and wanted.

But this was never
A ghost's endeavour
Nor, finished this,
Was ghost at ease;
And till it pass
Love shall not near
The sweetness here,
Nor sorrow take
His endless look.

## *If I Could Tell You**

Time will say nothing but I told you so,
Time only knows the price we have to pay;
If I could tell you I would let you know.

If we should weep when clowns put on their show,
If we should stumble when musicians play,
Time will say nothing but I told you so.

There are no fortunes to be told, although,
Because I love you more than I can say,
If I could tell you I would let you know.

The winds must come from somewhere when they blow,
There must be reasons why the leaves decay;
Time will say nothing but I told you so.

Perhaps the roses really want to grow,
The vision seriously intends to stay;
If I could tell you I would let you know.

Suppose the lions all get up and go,
And all the books and soldiers run away;
Will Time say nothing but I told you so?
If I could tell you I would let you know.

## *Which Side Am I Supposed to Be On?*

Though aware of our rank and alert to obey orders,
Watching with binoculars the movement of the grass for
an ambush,
The pistol cocked, the code-word committed to memory;
The youngest drummer
Knows all the peace-time stories like the oldest soldier,
Though frontier-conscious.

About the tall white gods who landed from their open boat,
Skilled in the working of copper, appointing our feast-days,
Before the islands were submerged, when the weather was calm,
The maned lion common,
An open wishing-well in every garden;
When love came easy.

Perfectly certain, all of us, but not from the records,
Not from the unshaven agent who returned to the camp;
The pillar dug from the desert recorded only
The sack of a city,
The agent clutching his side collapsed at our feet,
'Sorry! They got me!'

Yes, they were living here once but do not now,
Yes, they are living still but do not here;
Lying awake after Lights Out a recruit may speak up:
'Who told you all this?'
The tent-talk pauses a little till a veteran answers
'Go to sleep, Sonny!'

Turning over he closes his eyes, and then in a moment
Sees the sun at midnight bright over cornfield and pasture,
Our hope. . . . Someone jostles him, fumbling for boots,

Time to change guard:
Boy, the quarrel was before your time, the aggressor
No one you know.

Your childish moments of awareness were all of our world,
At five you sprang, already a tiger in the garden,
At night your mother taught you to pray for our Daddy
Far away fighting,
One morning you fell off a horse and your brother mocked you:
'Just like a girl!'

You've got their names to live up to and questions won't help,
You've a very full programme, first aid, gunnery, tactics,
The technique to master of raids and hand-to-hand fighting;
Are you in training?
Are you taking care of yourself? are you sure of passing
The endurance test?

Now we're due to parade on the square in front of the Cathedral,
When the bishop has blessed us, to file in after the choirboys,
To stand with the wine-dark conquerors in the roped-off pews,
Shout ourselves hoarse:
'They ran like hares; we have broken them up like firewood;
They fought against God'.

While in a great rift in the limestone miles away
At the same hour they gather, tethering their horses beside them;
A scarecrow prophet from a boulder foresees our judgment,
Their oppressors howling;
And the bitter psalm is caught by the gale from the rocks:
'How long shall they flourish?'

What have we all been doing to have made from Fear
That laconic war-bitten captain addressing them now?
Heart and head shall be keener, mood the more

As our might lessens':
To have caused their shout 'We will fight till we lie down beside
The Lord we have loved'.

There's Wrath who has learnt every trick of guerrilla warfare,
The shamming dead, the night-raid, the feinted retreat;
Envy their brilliant pamphleteer, to lying
As husband true,
Expert impersonator and linguist, proud of his power
To hoodwink sentries.

Gluttony living alone, austerer than us,
Big simple Greed, Acedia famed with them all
For her stamina, keeping the outposts, and somewhere Lust
With his sapper's skill,
Muttering to his fuses in a tunnel 'Could I meet here with Love,
I would hug her to death'.

There are faces there for which for a very long time
We've been on the look-out, though often at home we imagined.
Catching sight of a back or hearing a voice through a doorway.
We had found them at last;
Put our arms round their necks and looked in their eyes
and discovered
We were unlucky.

And some of them, surely, we seem to have seen before:
Why, that girl who rode off on her bicycle one fine
summer evening
And never returned, she's there; and the banker we'd noticed
Worried for weeks;
Till he failed to arrive one morning and his room was empty,
Gone with a suitcase.

They speak of things done on the frontier we were never told,
The hidden path to their squat Pictish tower

They will never reveal though kept without sleep, for their
code is
'Death to the squealer':
They are brave, yes, though our newspapers mention
their bravery
In inverted commas.

But careful; back to our lines; it is unsafe there,
Passports are issued no longer; that area is closed;
There's no fire in the waiting-room now at the climbers' Junction,
And all this year
Work has been stopped on the power-house; the wind
whistles under
The half-built culverts.

Do you think that because you have heard that on Christmas Eve
In a quiet sector they walked about on the skyline,
Exchanged cigarettes, both learning the words for 'I love you'
In either language:
You can stroll across for a smoke and a chat any evening?
Try it and see.

That rifle-sight you're designing; is it ready yet?
You're holding us up; the office is getting impatient;
The square munition works out on the old allotments
Needs stricter watching;
If you see any loiterers there you may shoot without warning,
We must stop that leakage.

All leave is cancelled to-night; we must say good-bye.
We entrain at once for the North; we shall see in the morning
The headlands we're doomed to attack; snow down to
the tide-line:
Though the bunting signals
'Indoors before it's too late; cut peat for your fires,'
We shall lie out there.

# *The Hard Question*

To ask the hard question is simple;
Asking at meeting
With the simple glance of acquaintance
To what these go
And how these do:
To ask the hard question is simple,
The simple act of the confused will.

But the answer
Is hard and hard to remember:
On steps or on shore
The ears listening
To words at meeting,
The eyes looking
At the hands helping,
Are never sure
Of what they learn
From how these things are done.
And forgetting to listen or see
Makes forgetting easy;
Only remembering the method of remembering,
Remembering only in another way,
Only the strangely exciting lie,
Afraid
To remember what the fish ignored,
How the bird escaped, or if the sheep obeyed.

Till, losing memory,
Bird, fish, and sheep are ghostly,
And ghosts must do again
What gives them pain.
Cowardice cries

For windy skies,
Coldness for water,
Obedience for a master.

Shall memory restore
The steps and the shore,
The face and the meeting place;
Shall the bird live,
Shall the fish dive,
And sheep obey
In a sheep's way;
Can love remember
The question and the answer,
For love recover
What has been dark and rich and warm all over?

## *The Unknown Citizen*

(*To JS/07/M/378*
*This Marble Monument*
*Is Erected by the State*)

He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be
One against whom there was no official complaint,
And all the reports on his conduct agree
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he
was a saint,
For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.
Except for the War till the day he retired
He worked in a factory and never got fired,
But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.
Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,
For his Union reports that he paid his dues,
(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)

And our Social Psychology workers found
That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.
The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day
And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in
every way.
Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,
And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital but left
it cured.
Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare
He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan
And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,
A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.
Our researchers into Public Opinion are content
That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;
When there was peace, he was for peace; when there was war,
he went.
He was married and added five children to the population,
Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of
his generation,
And our teachers report that he never interfered with
their education.
Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:
Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

## *What's the Matter?*

To lie flat on the back with the knees flexed
And sunshine on the soft receptive belly,
Or face down, the insolent spine relaxed,
No more compelled to cower or to bully,

Is good; and good to see them passing by
Below on the white side-walk in the heat,
The dog, the lady with parcels, and the boy:
There is the casual life outside the heart.

Yes, we are out of sight and earshot here.
Are you aware what weapon you are loading,
To what this teasing talk is quietly leading?
Our pulses count but do not judge the hour.
Who are you with from whom you turn away,
At whom you dare not look? Do you know why?

## *It's So Dull Here*

To settle in this village of the heart,
My darling, can you bear it? True, the Hall
With its yews and famous dovecote is still there
Just as in childhood, but the grand old couple
Who loved us all so equally are dead,
And now it is a licensed house for tourists,
None too particular: one of the new
Trunk roads passes the very door already,
And the thin cafés spring up overnight.
The sham ornamentation, the strident swimming pool,
The identical and townee smartness,
Will you really see these as home and not depend
For comfort on the chance, the shy encounter
With the irresponsible beauty of a stranger?
O can you see precisely in our gaucheness
The neighbours' strongest wish, to serve and love?

## *Herman Melville*

(*For Lincoln Kirstein*)

Towards the end he sailed into an extraordinary mildness,
And anchored in his home and reached his wife
And rode within the harbour of her hand,
And went across each morning to an office
As though his occupation were another island.

Goodness existed: that was the new knowledge
His terror had to blow itself quite out
To let him see it; but it was the gale had blown him
Past the Cape Horn of sensible success
Which cries: 'This rock is Eden. Shipwreck here.'

But deafened him with thunder and confused with lightning:
—The maniac hero hunting like a jewel
The rare ambiguous monster that had maimed his sex,
Hatred for hatred ending in a scream,
The unexplained survivor breaking off the nightmare—
All that was intricate and false; the truth was simple.

Evil is unspectacular and always human,
And shares our bed and eats at our own table,
And we are introduced to Goodness every day,
Even in drawing-rooms among a crowd of faults;
He has a name like Billy and is almost perfect
But wears a stammer like a decoration:
And every time they meet the same thing has to happen;
It is the Evil that is helpless like a lover
And has to pick a quarrel and succeeds,
And both are openly destroyed before our eyes.

For now he was awake and knew
No one is ever spared except in dreams;
But there was something else the nightmare had distorted—
Even the punishment was human and a form of love:
The howling storm had been his father's presence
And all the time he had been carried on his father's breast.

Who now had set him gently down and left him.
He stood upon the narrow balcony and listened:
And all the stars above him sang as in his childhood
'All, all is vanity,' but it was not the same;

For now the words descended like the calm of mountains—
—Nathaniel had been shy because his love was selfish—
But now he cried in exultation and surrender
'The Godhead is broken like bread. We are the pieces.'

And sat down at his desk and wrote a story.

## *When the Devil Drives*

Under boughs between our tentative endearments how should
we hear
But with flushing pleasure drums distant over difficult country,
Events not actual
In time's unlenient will?

Which we shall not avoid, though at a station's chance delay
Lines branch to peace, iron up valleys to a hidden village;
For we have friends to catch
And none leave coach.

Sharers of our own day, thought smiling of, but nothing known,
What industries decline, what chances are of revolution,
What murders flash
Under composed flesh.

Knowledge no need to us whose wrists enjoy the chafing leash,
Can plunder high nests; who sheer off from old like gull
from granite,
From their mind's constant sniffling,
Their blood's dulled shuffling.

Who feebling, still have time to wonder at the well-shaped heads
Conforming every day more closely to the best in albums:
Fathers in sons may track
Their voices trick.

But their ancestral curse, jumbled perhaps and put away,
Baffled for years, at last in one repeats its potent pattern
And blows fall more than once,
Although he wince:

Who was to moorland market town retired for work or love,
May creep to sumps, pile up against the door, crouching in cases,
This anger falling
Opens, empties that filling.

Let each one share our pity, hard to withhold and hard to bear.
None knows of the next day if it be less or more, the sorrow:
Escaping cannot try;
Must wait though it destroy.

## *The Riddle*

Underneath the leaves of life,
Green on the prodigious tree,
In a trance of grief
Stand the fallen man and wife:
Far away the single stag
Banished to a lonely crag
Gazes placid out to sea,
And from thickets round about
Breeding animals look in
On Duality,
And the birds fly in and out
Of the world of man.

Down in order from the ridge,
Bayonets glittering in the sun,
Soldiers who will judge
Wind towards the little bridge:

Even politicians speak
Truths of value to the weak,
Necessary acts are done
By the ill and the unjust;
But the Judgment and the Smile,
  Though these two-in-one
See creation as they must,
  None shall reconcile.

Bordering our middle earth
Kingdoms of the Short and Tall,
  Rivals for our faith,
Stir up envy from our birth:
So the giant who storms the sky
In an angry wish to die
Wakes the hero in us all,
While the tiny with their power
To divide and hide and flee,
  When our fortunes fall
Tempt to a belief in our
  Immortality.

Lovers running each to each
Feel such timid dreams catch fire
  Blazing as they touch,
Learn what love alone can teach:
Happy on a tousled bed
Praise Blake's acumen who said:
'One thing only we require
Of each other; we must see
In another's lineaments
  Gratified desire';
That is our humanity;
  Nothing else contents.

Nowhere else could I have known
Than, beloved, in your eyes
  What we have to learn,
That we love ourselves alone:
All our terrors burned away
We can learn at last to say:
'All our knowledge comes to this,
That existence is enough,
That in savage solitude
  Or the play of love
Every living creature is
  Woman, Man, and Child'.

## *Between Adventure*

Upon this line between adventure
Prolong the meeting out of good nature
Obvious in each agreeable feature.

Calling of each other by name
Smiling, taking a willing arm
Has the companionship of a game.

But should the walk do more than this
Out of bravado or drunkenness
Forward or back are menaces.

On neither side let foot slip over
Invading Always, exploring Never,
For this is hate and this is fear.

On narrowness stand, for sunlight is
Brightest only on surfaces;
No anger, no traitor, but peace.

## *Brussels In Winter*

Wandering the cold streets tangled like old string,
Coming on fountains silent in the frost,
The city still escapes you; it has lost
The qualities that say 'I am a Thing'.

Only the homeless and the really humbled
Seem to be sure exactly where they are,
And in their misery are all assembled;
The winter holds them like the Opera.

Ridges of rich apartments rise to-night
Where isolated windows glow like farms:
A phrase goes packed with meaning like a van,

A look contains the history of man,
And fifty francs will earn the stranger right
To warm the heartless city in his arms.

## *A Free One*

Watch any day his nonchalant pauses, see
His dextrous handling of a wrap as he
Steps after into cars, the beggar's envy.

'There is a free one,' many say, but err.
He is not that returning conqueror,
Nor ever the poles' circumnavigator.

But poised between shocking falls on razor-edge
Has taught himself this balancing subterfuge
Of the accosting profile, the erect carriage.

The song, the varied action of the blood
Would drown the warning from the iron wood
Would cancel the inertia of the buried:

Travelling by daylight on from house to house
The longest way to the intrinsic peace,
With love's fidelity and with love's weakness.

## *1st January 1931*

Watching in three planes from a room overlooking the courtyard
That year decaying,
Stub-end of year that smoulders to ash of winter,
The last day dropping;
Lo, a dream met me in middle night, I saw in a vision
Life pass as a gull, as a spy, as a dog-hated dustman:
And heard a voice saying—'Subjects, Objects, all of you,
Read of your losses'.

Shaped me a Lent scene first, a bed, hard, surgical,
And a wound hurting;
The hour in the night when Lawrence died and I came
Round from the morphia.
A train went clanking over the bridges leaving the city;
A sleep-walker pushed on groaning down the velvet passage;
The night-nurse visited—'We shall not all sleep, dearie',
She said, and left me.

Felt sap collecting anon in unlighted cylinders
For birdward facing;
The flat snake moving again in the pit, the schoolboy
From home migrating.
After a night of storm was a lawn in sunlight,
A colleague bending for measurements there at the rain-gauge,
Gritting his teeth after breakfast, the Headmaster muttered
'Call no man happy'.

Came summer like a flood, did never greediest gardener
Make blossoms flusher:
Sunday meant lakes for many, a browner body
Beauty from burning:
Far out in the water two heads discussed the position,
Out of the reeds like a fowl jumped the undressed German,
And Pretzel signalled from the sand dunes like a
wooden madman
'Destroy this temple'.

It did fall. The quick hare died to the hound's hot breathing,
The Jewess fled Southwards;
The drunken Scotsman, regarding the moons hedge-rising,
Shook and saluted:
And in cold Europe, in the middle of Autumn destruction,
Maverick stood, his face grown lined with wincing
In front of ignorance—'Tell the English', he shivered,
'Man is a spirit'.

What I saw further was general but in sorrow,
Many together
Forgiving each other in the dark of the picture palaces
But past forgiveness;
The pair walking out on the mole, getting ready to quarrel,
The exile from superb Africa, employed in a laundry;
Deserters, mechanics, conjurers, delicate martyrs,
All self-regarders.

I saw the brain-track perfected, laid for conveying
The fatal error,
Sending the body to islands or after its father,
Cold with a razor:
One sniffed at a root to make him dream of a woman,
One laid his hands on the heads of dear little pages;
Neither in the bed nor on the *arrête* was there shown me
One with power.

'Save me!' the voice commanded, but as I paused hesitant
A troop rushed forward.
Granny in mittens, the Judge, the bucolic doctor,
And the suave archdeacon.
The captains grouped round the flagstaff shut up their glasses,
Broke yelping over the gravel—as I stood a spectator,
One tapped my shoulder and asked me 'How did you fall, sir?'
Whereat I awakened.

Roof-line sharpens, intense in the New Year morning;
Far down in courtyard
Beggar addresses the earth on the state of East Europe:
'Won't you speak louder?
Have you heard of someone swifter than Syrian horses?
Has he thrown the bully of Corinth in the sanded circle?
Has he crossed the Isthmus already? is he seeking brilliant
Athens and us?'

## *Have a Good Time*

'We have brought you,' they said, 'a map of the country;
Here is the line that runs to the vats,
This patch of green on the left is the wood,
We've pencilled an arrow to point out the bay.
No thank you, no tea; why look at the clock.
Keep it? Of course. It goes with our love.

We shall watch your future and send our love.
We lived for years, you know, in the country.
Remember at week-ends to wind up the clock.
We've wired to our manager at the vats.
The tides are perfectly safe in the bay,
But whatever you do don't go to the wood.

There's a flying trickster in that wood,
And we shan't be there to help with our love.
Keep fit by bathing in the bay,
You'll never catch fever then in the country.
You're sure of a settled job at the vats
If you keep their hours and live by the clock.'

He arrived at last; it was time by the clock.
He crossed himself as he passed the wood;
Black against evening sky the vats
Brought tears to his eyes as he thought of their love;
Looking out over the darkening country
He saw the pier in the little bay.

At the week-ends the divers in the bay
Distracted his eyes from the bandstand clock;
When down with fever and in the country
A skein of swans above the wood
Caused him no terror; he came to love
The moss that grew on the derelict vats.

And he has met sketching at the vats
Guests from the new hotel in the bay;
Now curious following his love,
His pulses differing from the clock,
Finds consummation in the wood
And sees for the first time the country.

Sees water in the wood and trees by the bay,
Hears a clock striking near the vats;
'This is your country and the home of love'.

## *Let History Be My Judge*

We made all possible preparations,
Drew up a list of firms,
Constantly revised our calculations
And allotted the farms,

Issued all the orders expedient
In this kind of case:
Most, as was expected, were obedient,
Though there were murmurs, of course;

Chiefly against our exercising
Our old right to abuse:
Even some sort of attempt at rising
But these were mere boys.

For never serious misgiving
Occurred to anyone,
Since there could be no question of living
If we did not win.

The generally accepted view teaches
That there was no excuse,
Though in the light of recent researches
Many would find the cause.

In a not uncommon form of terror;
Others, still more astute,
Point to possibilities of error
At the very start.

As for ourselves there is left remaining
Our honour at least,
And a reasonable chance of retaining
Our faculties to the last.

## *Orpheus*

What does the song hope for? And he moved hands
A little way from the birds, the shy, the delightful?
To be bewildered and happy,
Or most of all the knowledge of life?

But the beautiful are content with the sharp notes of the air;
The warmth is enough. O if winter really
Oppose, if the weak snowflake,
What will the wish, what will the dance do?

## *The Exiles*

What siren zooming is sounding our coming
Up frozen fjord forging from freedom
What shepherd's call
When stranded on hill,
With broken axle
On track to exile?

With labelled luggage we alight at last
Joining joking at the junction on the moor
With practised smile
And harmless tale
Advance to meet
Each new recruit.

Expert from uplands, always in oilskins,
Recliner from library, laying down law,
Owner from shire,
All meet on this shore
Facing each prick
With ginger pluck.

Our rooms are ready, the register signed,
There is time to take a turn before dark,
See the blistering paint
On the scorching front,
Or icicles sombre
On pierhead timber.

To climb the cliff path to the coastguard's point
Past the derelict dock deserted by rats,
Look from concrete sill
Of fort for sale
To the bathers' rocks,
The lovers' ricks.

Our boots will be brushed, our bolsters pummelled,
Cupboards are cleared for keeping our clothes.
Here we shall live
And somehow love
Though we only master
The sad posture.

Picnics are promised and planned for July
To the wood with the waterfall, walks to find,
Traces of birds,
A mole, a rivet,
In factory yards
Marked strictly private.

There will be skating and curling at Christmas—indoors
Charades and ragging; then riders pass
Some afternoons
In snowy lanes
Shut in by wires,
Surplus from wars.

In Spring we shall spade the soil on the border
For blooming of bulbs; we shall bow in Autumn
When trees make passes,
As high gale pushes,
And bewildered leaves
Fall on our lives.

Watching through windows the wastes of evening,
The flare of foundries at fall of the year,
The slight despair
At what we are,
The marginal grief
Is source of life.

In groups forgetting the gun in the drawer
Need pray for no pardon, are proud till recalled
By music on water
To lack of stature,
Saying Alas
To less and less.

Till holding our hats in our hands for talking,
Or striding down streets for something to see,
Gas-light in shops,
The fate of ships
And the tide-wind
Touch the old wound.

Till the town is ten and the time is London
And nerves grow numb between north and south
Hear last in corner
The pffwungg of burner
Accepting dearth,
The shadow of death.

## *Few and Simple**

Whenever you are thought, the mind
Amazes me with all the kind
Old such-and-such it says about you
As if I were the one that you
Attach unique importance to,
Not one who would but didn't get you.

Startling us both at certain hours,
The flesh that mind insists is ours,
Though I, for one, by now know better,
Gets ready for no-matter-what
As if it had forgotten that
What happens is another matter.

Few as they are, these facts are all
The richest moment can recall,
However it may choose to group them,
And, simple as they look, enough
To make the most ingenious love
Think twice of trying to escape them.

## *Canzone**

When shall we learn, what should be clear as day,
We cannot choose what we are free to love?
Although the mouse we banished yesterday
Is an enraged rhinoceros to-day,
Our value is more threatened than we know:
Shabby objections to our present day
Go snooping round its outskirts; night and day
Faces, orations, battles, bait our will

As questionable forms and noises will;
Whole phyla of resentments every day
Give status to the wild men of the world
Who rule the absent-minded and this world.

We are created from and with the world
To suffer with and from it day by day:
Whether we meet in a majestic world
Of solid measurements or a dream world
Of swans and gold, we are required to love
All homeless objects that require a world.
Our claim to own our bodies and our world
Is our catastrophe. What can we know
But panic and caprice until we know
Our dreadful appetite demands a world
Whose order, origin, and purpose will
Be fluent satisfaction of our will?

Drift, Autumn, drift; fall, colours, where you will:
Bald melancholia minces through the world.
Regret, cold oceans, the lymphatic will
Caught in reflection on the right to will:
While violent dogs excite their dying day
To bacchic fury; snarl, though, as they will,
Their teeth are not a triumph for the will
But utter hesitation. What we love
Ourselves for is our power not to love,
To shrink to nothing or explode at will,
To ruin and remember that we know
What ruins and hyaenas cannot know.

If in this dark now I less often know
That spiral staircase where the haunted will
Hunts for its stolen luggage, who should know
Better than you, beloved, how I know
What gives security to any world,

Or in whose mirror I begin to know
The chaos of the heart as merchants know
Their coins and cities, genius its own day?
For through our lively traffic all the day,
In my own person I am forced to know
How much must be forgotten out of love,
How much must be forgiven, even love.

Dear flesh, dear mind, dear spirit, O dear love,
In the depths of myself blind monsters know
Your presence and are angry, dreading Love
That asks its images for more than love;
The hot rampageous horses of my will,
Catching the scent of Heaven, whinny: Love
Gives no excuse to evil done for love,
Neither in you, nor me, nor armies, nor the world
Of words and wheels, nor any other world.
Dear fellow-creature, praise our God of Love
That we are so admonished, that no day
Of conscious trial be a wasted day.

Or else we make a scarecrow of the day,
Loose ends and jumble of our common world,
And stuff and nonsense of our own free will;
Or else our changing flesh may never know
There must be sorrow if there can be love.

## *In Memory of Sigmund Freud*

(*d. September* 1939)

When there are so many we shall have to mourn,
When grief has been made so public, and exposed
To the critique of a whole epoch
The frailty of our conscience and anguish,

Of whom shall we speak? For every day they die
Among us, those who were doing us some good,
And knew it was never enough but
Hoped to improve a little by living.

Such was this doctor: still at eighty he wished
To think of our life, from whose unruliness
So many plausible young futures
With threats or flattery ask obedience.

But his wish was denied him; he closed his eyes
Upon that last picture common to us all,
Of problems like relatives standing
Puzzled and jealous about our dying.

For about him at the very end were still
Those he had studied, the nervous and the nights,
And shades that still waited to enter
The bright circle of his recognition

Turned elsewhere with their disappointment as he
Was taken away from his old interest
To go back to the earth in London
An important Jew who died in exile.

Only Hate was happy, hoping to augment
His practice now, and his shabby clientèle
Who think they can be cured by killing
And covering the gardens with ashes.

They are still alive but in a world he changed
Simply by looking back with no false regrets;
All that he did was to remember
Like the old and be honest like children.

He wasn't clever at all: he merely told
The unhappy Present to recite the Past
Like a poetry lesson till sooner
Or later it faltered at the line where

Long ago the accusations had begun,
And suddenly knew by whom it had been judged,
How rich life had been and how silly,
And was life-forgiven and more humble.

Able to approach the Future as a friend
Without a wardrobe of excuses, without
A set mask of rectitude or an
Embarrassing over-familiar gesture.

No wonder the ancient cultures of conceit
In his technique of unsettlement foresaw
The fall of princes, the collapse of
Their lucrative patterns of frustration.

If he succeeded, why, the Generalized Life
Would become impossible, the monolith
Of State be broken and prevented
The co-operation of avengers.

Of course they called on God: but he went his way,
Down among the Lost People like Dante, down
To the stinking fosse where the injured
Lead the ugly life of the rejected.

And showed us what evil is: not as we thought
Deeds that must be punished, but our lack of faith,
Our dishonest mood of denial,
The concupiscence of the oppressor.

And if something of the autocratic pose,
The paternal strictness he distrusted, still
Clung to his utterance and features,
It was a protective imitation.

For one who lived among enemies so long;
If often he was wrong and at times absurd,
To us he is no more a person
Now but a whole climate of opinion,

Under whom we conduct our differing lives:
Like weather he can only hinder or help,
The proud can still be proud but find it
A little harder, and the tyrant tries

To make him do but doesn't care for him much.
He quietly surrounds all our habits of growth;
He extends, till the tired in even
The remotest most miserable duchy

Have felt the change in their bones and are cheered,
And the child unlucky in his little State,
Some hearth where freedom is excluded,
A hive whose honey is fear and worry,

Feels calmer now and somehow assured of escape;
While as they lie in the grass of our neglect,
So many long-forgotten objects
Revealed by his undiscouraged shining

Are returned to us and made precious again;
Games we had thought we must drop as we grew up,
Little noises we dared not laugh at,
Faces we made when no one was looking.

But he wishes us more than this: to be free
Is often to be lonely; he would unite
The unequal moieties fractured
By our own well-meaning sense of justice.

Would restore to the larger the wit and will
The smaller possesses but can only use
For arid disputes, would give back to
The son the mother's richness of feeling.

But he would have us remember most of all
To be enthusiastic over the night
Not only for the sense of wonder
It alone has to offer, but also

Because it needs our love: for with sad eyes
Its delectable creatures look up and beg
Us dumbly to ask them to follow;
They are exiles who long for the future

That lies in our power. They too would rejoice
If allowed to serve enlightenment like him,
Even to bear our cry of 'Judas,'
As he did and all must bear who serve it.

One rational voice is dumb: over a grave
The household of Impulse mourns one dearly loved.
Sad is Eros, builder of cities,
And weeping anarchic Aphrodite.

# *The Voyage*

Where does the journey look which the watcher upon
the quay,
Standing under his evil star, so bitterly envies?
When the mountains swim away with slow calm strokes,
and the gulls
Abandon their vow? Does it still promise the Juster Life?

And, alone with his heart at last, does the traveller find
In the vaguer touch of the wind and the fickle flash of
the sea
Proofs that somewhere there exists, really, the Good Place,
As certain as those the children find in stones and holes?

No, he discovers nothing: he does not want to arrive.
The journey is false; the false journey really an illness
On the false island where the heart cannot act and will
not suffer:
He condones the fever; he is weaker than he thought; his
weakness is real.

But at moments, as when the real dolphins with leap
and abandon
Cajole for recognition, or, far away, a real island
Gets up to catch his eye, the trance is broken: he remembers
The hours, the places where he was well; he believes in joy.

And maybe the fever shall have a cure, the true journey
an end
Where hearts meet and are really true: and away this sea
that parts
The hearts that alter, but is the same, always; and goes
Everywhere, joining the false and the true, but cannot suffer.

# *Crisis*

Where do They come from? Those whom we so much dread
As on our dearest location falls the chill
Of their crooked wing and endangers
The melting friend, the aqueduct, the flower.

Terrible Presences that the ponds reflect
Back at the famous, and when the blond boy
Bites eagerly into the shining
Apple, emerge in their shocking fury.

And we realize the woods are deaf and the sky
Nurses no one, and we are awake and these
Like farmers have purpose and knowledge,
And towards us their hate is directed.

We are the barren pastures to which they bring
The resentment of outcasts; on us they work
Out their despair; they wear our weeping
As the disgraceful badge of their exile.

O we conjured them here like a lying map;
Desiring the extravagant joy of life
We lured with a mirage of orchards
Fat in the lazy climate of refuge.

Our money sang like streams on the aloof peaks
Of our thinking that beckoned them on like girls;
Our culture like a West of wonder
Shone a solemn promise in their faces.

We expected the beautiful or the wise
Ready to see a charm in our childish fib,
Pleased to find nothing but stones and
Able at once to create a garden.

But those who come are not even children with
The big indiscriminate eyes we had lost,
Occupying our narrow spaces
With their anarchist vivid abandon.

They arrive, already adroit, having learned
Restraint at the table of a father's rage;
In a mother's distorting mirror
They discovered the Meaning of Knowing.

These pioneers have long adapted themselves
To the night and the nightmare; they come equipped
To reply to terror with terror,
With lies to unmask the least deception.

For a future of marriage nevertheless
The bed is prepared, though all our whiteness shrinks
From the hairy and clumsy bridegroom,
We conceive in the shuddering instant.

For the barren must wish to bear though the Spring
Punish; and the crooked that dreads to be straight
Cannot alter its prayer but summons
Out of the dark a horrible rector.

O the striped and vigorous tiger can move
With style through the borough of murder; the ape
Is really at home in the parish
Of grimacing and licking: but we have

Failed as their pupils. Our tears well from a love
We have never outgrown; out cities predict
More than we hope; even our armies
Have to express our need of forgiveness.

# *Epithalamion*

*(For Giuseppe Antonio Borgese and Elizabeth Mann, 23rd November* 1939)

While explosives blow to dust
Friends and hopes, we cannot pray,
Absolute conviction must
Seem the whole of life to youth,
Battle's stupid gross event
Keep all learning occupied:
Yet the seed becomes the tree;
Happier savants may decide
That this quiet wedding of
A Borgese and a Mann
Planted human unity;
Hostile kingdoms of the truth,
Fighting fragments of content,
Here were reconciled by love,
Modern policy begun
    On this day.

A priori dogmas brought
Into one collective will
All the European thought:
Eagle theologians swept
With an autocratic eye
Hungry for potential foes
The whole territory of truth
Where the great cathedrals rose;
Gentle to instinctive crimes,
With a sharp indulgence heard
Paradox-debating youth,
Listened where the injured wept
For the first rebellious sigh,
And unerringly at times
On some small progressive bird
    Swooped to kill.

But beneath them as they flew
Merchants with more prudent gaze
Broke eternity in two:
Unconcerned at the controls
Sat an ascetic engineer
In whose intellectual hand
Worlds of dull material lay,
All that bankers understand;
While elected by the heart
Out of sentiment, a lamb
With haemorrhages night and day
Saved enthusiastic souls;
Sorrow apt to interfere,
Wit that spoils romantic art,
In the social diagram
    Knew their place.

Yet no lie has only friends
Too polite to ask for proof:
Patriots, peering through the lens
Of their special discipline
At the map of knowledge, see
Superstition overcome
As all national frontiers melt
In a true imperium;
Fearing foreign skills no more,
Feel in each conative act
Such a joy as Dante felt
When, a total failure in
An inferior city, he,
Dreaming out his anger, saw
All the scattered leaves of fact
    Bound by love.

May this bed of marriage be
Symbol now of the rebirth
Asked of old humanity:
Let creative limbs explore
All creation's pleasure then;
Laughing horses, rocks that scream,
All the flowers that ever flew
Through the banquet of a dream,
Find in you a common love
Of extravagant sanity;
Till like Leonardo who,
Jostled by the sights of war
And unpleasant greedy men,
At Urbino watched a dove,
Your experience justify
    Life on earth.

Grateful in your happiness,
Let your Ariels fly away
To a gay unconsciousness
And a freely chosen task:
Shame at our shortcomings makes
Lame magicians of us all,
Forcing our invention to
An illegal miracle
And a theatre of disguise;
Brilliantly your angels took
Every lover's rôle for you,
Wore seduction like a mask
Or were frigid for your sakes;
Set these shadows, now your eyes
On the whole of substance look,
    Free to-day.

Kindly to each other turn,
Every timid vice forgive
With a quaker's quiet concern
For the uncoercive law,
Till your double wish be one,
Till, as you successful lie,
Begotten possibility,
Censoring the nostalgic sigh
To be nothing or be right,
Form its ethical resolve
Now to suffer and to be:
Though the kingdoms are at war,
All the peoples see the sun,
All the dwellings stand in light,
All the unconquered worlds revolve,
    Life must live.

Vowing to redeem the State,
Now let every girl and boy
To the heaven of the Great
All their prayers and praises lift:
Mozart with ironic breath
Turning poverty to song.
Goethe ignorant of sin
Placing every human wrong,
Blake the industrious visionary,
Tolstoi the great animal,
Hellas-loving Hoelderlin,
Wagner who obeyed his gift
Organized his wish for death
Into a tremendous cry,
Looking down upon us, all
    Wish us joy.

# *The Watershed*

Who stands, the crux left of the watershed,
On the wet road between the chafing grass
Below him sees dismantled washing-floors,
Snatches of tramline running to the wood,
An industry already comatose,
Yet sparsely living. A ramshackle engine
At Cashwell raises water; for ten years
It lay in flooded workings until this,
Its latter office, grudgingly performed,
And further here and there, though many dead
Lie under the poor soil, some acts are chosen
Taken from recent winters; two there were
Cleaned out a damaged shaft by hand, clutching
The winch the gale would tear them from; one died
During a storm, the fells impassable,
Not at his village, but in wooden shape
Through long abandoned levels nosed his way
And in his final valley went to ground.

Go home, now, stranger, proud of your young stock,
Stranger, turn back again, frustrate and vexed:
This land, cut off, will not communicate,
Be no accessory content to one
Aimless for faces rather there than here.
Beams from your car may cross a bedroom wall,
They wake no sleeper; you may hear the wind
Arriving driven from the ignorant sea
To hurt itself on pane, on bark of elm
Where sap unbaffled rises, being spring;
But seldom this. Near you, taller than grass,
Ears poise before decision, scenting danger.

## *Better Not*

Who will endure
Heat of day and winter danger,
Journey from one place to another?
Nor be content to lie
Till evening upon headland over bay,
Between the land and sea;
Or smoking wait till hour of food,
Leaning on chain-up gate
At edge of wood?

Metals run
Burnished or rusty in the sun
From town to town,
And signals all along are down;
Yet nothing passes
But envelopes between these places,
Snatched at the gate and panting read indoors,
And first spring flowers arriving smashed,
Disaster stammered over wires,
And pity flashed.
For should professional traveller come,
Asked at the fireside he is dumb,
Declining with a small mad smile,
And all the while
Conjectures on the maps that lie
About in ships long high and dry
Grow stranger and stranger.

There is no change of place
But shifting of the head
To keep off glare of lamp from face,
Or climbing over to wall-side of bed;
No one will ever know

For what conversion brilliant capital is waiting,
What ugly feast may village band be celebrating;
For no one goes
Further than railhead or the ends of piers,
Will neither go nor send his son
Further through foothills than the rotting stack
Where gaitered gamekeeper with dog and gun
Will shout 'Turn back'.

## *The Questioner Who Sits So Sly*

Will you turn a deaf ear
To what they said on the shore,
Interrogate their poises
In their rich houses;

Of stork-legged heaven-reachers
Of the compulsory touchers
The sensitive amusers
And masked amazers?

Yet wear no ruffian badge
Nor lie behind the hedge
Waiting with bombs of conspiracy
In arm-pit secrecy;

Carry no talisman
For germ or the abrupt pain
Needing no concrete shelter
Nor porcelain filter?

Will you wheel death anywhere
In his invalid chair,
With no affectionate instant
But his attendant?

For to be held for friend
By an undeveloped mind
To be joke for children is
Death's happiness:

Whose anecdotes betray
His favourite colour as blue
Colour of distant bells
And boy's overalls.

His tales of the bad lands
Disturb the sewing hands;
Hard to be superior
On parting nausea;

To accept the cushions from
Women against martyrdom.
Yet applauding the circuits
Of racing cyclists.

Never to make signs
Fear neither maelstrom nor zones
Salute with soldiers' wives
When the flag waves;

Remembering there is
No recognized gift for this;
No income, no bounty,
No promised country.

But to see brave sent home
Hermetically sealed with shame
And cold's victorious wrestle
With molten metal.

A neutralizing peace
And an average disgrace
Are honour to discover
For later other.

## *As He Is*

Wrapped in a yielding air, beside
  The flower's soundless hunger,
Close to the tree's clandestine tide,
  Close to the bird's high fever,
  Loud in his hope and anger,
Erect about his skeleton,
  Stands the expressive lover,
  Stands the deliberate man.

Beneath the hot incurious sun,
  Past stronger beasts and fairer
He picks his way, a living gun,
  With gun and lens and Bible,
  A militant enquirer,
The friend, the rash, the enemy,
  The essayist, the able,
  Able at times to cry.

The friendless and unhated stone
  Lies everywhere about him,
The Brothered-One, the Not-Alone,
  The brothered and the hated
  Whose family have taught him
To set against the large and dumb,
  The timeless and the rooted,
  His money and his time.

For mother's fading hopes become
  Dull wives to his dull spirits
Soon dulled by nurse's moral thumb,
  That dullard fond betrayer,
  And, childish, he inherits,
So soon by legal father tricked,
  The tall and gorgeous tower,
  Gorgeous but locked, but locked.

And ruled by dead men never met,
  By pious guess deluded,
Upon the stool of madness set
  Or stool of desolation,
  Sits murderous and clear-headed;
Enormous beauties round him move,
  For grandiose is his vision
  And grandiose his love.

Determined on Time's honest shield
  The lamb must face the tigress,
Their faithful quarrel never healed
  Though, faithless, he consider
  His dream of vaguer ages,
Hunter and victim reconciled,
  The lion and the adder,
  The adder and the child.

Fresh loves betray him, every day
  Over his green horizon
A fresh deserter rides away,
  And miles away birds mutter
  Of ambush and of treason;
To fresh defeats he still must move,
  To further griefs and greater,
  And the defeat of grief.

# *Spain 1937*

Yesterday all the past. The language of size
Spreading to China along the trade-routes; the diffusion
Of the counting-frame and the cromlech;
Yesterday the shadow-reckoning in the sunny climates.

Yesterday the assessment of insurance by cards,
The divination of water; yesterday the invention
Of cart-wheels and clocks, the taming of
Horses; yesterday the bustling world of navigators.

Yesterday the abolition of fairies and giants;
The fortress like a motionless eagle eyeing the valley,
The chapel built in the forest;
Yesterday the carving of angels and of frightening gargoyles.

The trial of heretics among the columns of stone;
Yesterday the theological feuds in the taverns
And the miraculous cure at the fountain;
Yesterday the Sabbath of Witches. But to-day the struggle.

Yesterday the installation of dynamos and turbines;
The construction of railways in the colonial desert;
Yesterday the classic lecture
On the origin of Mankind. But to-day the struggle.

Yesterday the belief in the absolute value of Greek;
The fall of the curtain upon the death of a hero;
Yesterday the prayer to the sunset,
And the adoration of madmen. But to-day the struggle.

As the poet whispers, startled among the pines
Or, where the loose waterfall sings, compact, or upright
On the crag by the leaning tower:
'O my vision. O send me the luck of the sailor.'

And the investigator peers through his instruments
At the inhuman provinces, the virile bacillus
Or enormous Jupiter finished:
'But the lives of my friends. I inquire, I inquire.'

And the poor in their fireless lodgings dropping the sheets
Of the evening paper: 'Our day is our loss. O show us
History the operator, the
Organizer, Time the refreshing river.'

And the nations combine each cry, invoking the life
That shapes the individual belly and orders
The private nocturnal terror:
'Did you not found once the city state of the sponge,

'Raise the vast military empires of the shark
And the tiger, establish the robin's plucky canton?
Intervene. O descend as a dove or
A furious papa or a mild engineer: but descend.'

And the life, if it answers at all, replies from the heart
And the eyes and the lungs, from the shops and squares of the city:
'O no, I am not the Mover,
Not to-day, not to you. To you I'm the

'Yes-man, the bar-companion, the easily-duped:
I am whatever you do; I am your vow to be
Good, your humorous story;
I am your business voice; I am your marriage.

'What's your proposal? To build the Just City? I will.
I agree. Or is it the suicide pact, the romantic
Death? Very well, I accept, for
I am your choice, your decision: yes, I am Spain.'

Many have heard it on remote peninsulas,
On sleepy plains, in the aberrant fishermen's islands,
In the corrupt heart of the city;
Have heard and migrated like gulls or the seeds of a flower.

They clung like burrs to the long expresses that lurch
Through the unjust lands, through the night, through the alpine tunnel;
They floated over the oceans;
They walked the passes: they came to present their lives.

On that arid square, that fragment nipped off from hot
Africa, soldered so crudely to inventive Europe,
On that tableland scored by rivers,
Our fever's menacing shapes are precise and alive.

To-morrow, perhaps, the future: the research on fatigue
And the movements of packers; the gradual exploring of all the
Octaves of radiation;
To-morrow the enlarging of consciousness by diet and breathing.

To-morrow the rediscovery of romantic love;
The photographing of ravens; all the fun under
Liberty's masterful shadow;
To-morrow the hour of the pageant-master and the musician.

To-morrow, for the young, the poets exploding like bombs,
The walks by the lake, the winter of perfect communion;
To-morrow the bicycle races
Through the suburbs on summer evenings: but to-day the struggle.

To-day the inevitable increase in the chances of death;
The conscious acceptance of guilt in the fact of murder;
To-day the expending of powers
On the flat ephemeral pamphlet and the boring meeting.

To-day the makeshift consolations; the shared cigarette;
The cards in the candle-lit barn and the scraping concert,
The masculine jokes; to-day the
Fumbled and unsatisfactory embrace before hurting.

The stars are dead; the animals will not look:
We are left alone with our day, and the time is short and
History to the defeated
May say Alas but cannot help or pardon.

## *Prothalamion*

You who return to-night to a narrow bed
With one name running sorrowfully through your sorrowful head,
You who have never been touched, and you, pale lover,
Who left the house this morning kissed all over,
You little boys also of quite fourteen
Beginning to realize just what we mean,
*Fill up glasses with champagne and drink again.*

It's not a new school or factory to which we summon,
We're here to-day because of a man and a woman.
Oh Chef, employ your continental arts
To celebrate the union of two loving hearts!
Waiters, be deft, and slip, you pages, by
To honour the god to name whom is to lie:
*Fill up glasses with champagne and drink again.*

Already he has brought the swallows past the Scillies
To chase each other skimming under English bridges,
Has loosed the urgent pollen on the glittering country
To find the pistil, force its burglar's entry,
He moves us also and up the marble stair
He leads the figures matched in beauty and desire;
*Fill up glasses with champagne and drink again.*

It's not only this we praise, it's the general love:
Let cat's mew rise to a scream on the tool-shed roof,
Let son come home to-night to his anxious mother,
Let the vicar lead the choirboy into a dark corner.
The orchard shall flower to-night that flowers every hundred years,
The boots and the slavey be found dutch-kissing on the stairs:
*Fill up glasses with champagne and drink again.*

Let this be kept as a generous hour by all,
This once let the uncle settle his nephew's bill,
Let the nervous lady's table gaucheness be forgiven,
Let the thief's explanation of the theft be taken,
The boy caught smoking shall escape the usual whipping,
To-night the expensive whore shall give herself for nothing:
*Fill up glasses with champagne and drink again.*

The landlocked state shall get its port to-day,
The midnight worker in the laboratory by the sea
Shall discover under the cross-wires that which he looks for,
To-night the asthmatic clerk shall dream he's a boxer,
Let the cold heart's wish be granted, the desire for a desire,
O give to the coward now his hour of power:
*Fill up glasses with champagne and drink again.*

# *The Witnesses*

Young men late in the night
  Toss on their beds
Their pillows do not comfort
  Their uneasy heads,
The lot that decides their fate
  Is cast to-morrow,
One must depart and face
  Danger and sorrow.

*Is it me? Is it me?*

Look in your heart and see:
  There lies the answer.
Though the heart like a clever
  Conjuror or dancer
Deceive you often into many
  A curious sleight
And motives like stowaways
  Are found too late.

*What shall he do, whose heart*
  *Chooses to depart?*

He shall against his peace
  Feel his heart harden,
Envy the heavy birds
  At home in a garden.
For walk he must the empty
  Selfish journey
Between the needless risk
  And the endless safety.

*Will he safe and sound*
  *Return to his own ground?*

Clouds and lions stand
  Before him dangerous
And the hostility of dreams.
  Oh let him honour Us
Lest he should be ashamed
  In the hour of crisis,
In the valleys of corrosion
  Tarnish his brightness.

*Who are You, whose speech*
*Sounds far out of reach?*

Your are the town and We are the clock.
We are the guardians of the gate in the rock.
  The Two.
On your left and on your right
In the day and in the night,
  We are watching you.

Wiser not to ask just what has occurred
To them who disobeyed our word;
  To those
We were the whirlpool, we were the reef,
We were the formal nightmare, grief
  And the unlucky rose.

Climb up the crane, learn the sailor's words
When the ships from the islands laden with birds
  Come in;
Tell you stories of fishing and other men's wives,
The expansive dreams of constricted lives,
  In the lighted inn.

But do not imagine We do not know,
Or that what you hide with such care won't show
  At a glance:

Nothing is done, nothing is said,
But don't make the mistake of believing us dead;
  I shouldn't dance.

We're afraid in that case you'll have a fall;
We've been watching you over the garden wall
  For hours:
The sky is darkening like a stain;
Something is going to fall like rain,
  And it won't be flowers.

When the green field comes off like a lid,
Revealing what was much better hid—
  Unpleasant:
And look, behind you without a sound
The woods have come up and are standing round
  In deadly crescent.

The bolt is sliding in its groove;
Outside the window is the black remov-
  -er's van:
And now with sudden swift emergence
Come the hooded women, the hump-backed surgeons,
  And the Scissor Man.

This might happen any day;
So be careful what you say
  And do:
Be clean, be tidy, oil the lock,
Weed the garden, wind the clock;
  Remember the Two.

# PART TWO



# *Paid on Both Sides*

# *Characters*

*

| *Lintzgarth* | *Nattrass* |
|---|---|
| JOHN NOWER | AARON SHAW**** |
| DICK | SETH SHAW |
| GEORGE**** | THE SPY—SETH'S BROTHER |
| WALTER | BERNARD |
| KURT | SETH'S MOTHER |
| CULLEY | ANNE SHAW |
| STEPHEN** | |

ZEPPEL—JOHN NOWER'S SERVANT
NO. 6
JOAN—MOTHER OF JOHN NOWER
TRUDY***

FATHER XMAS*
THE DOCTOR
BO****
PO*****
THE MAN-WOMAN
THE DOCTOR'S BOY**
THE ANNOUNCER*
THE CHIEF GUEST*
THE BUTLER*

THE CHORUS

*The starred parts should be doubled*

[*No scenery is required. The stage should have a curtained-off recess. The distinction between the two hostile parties should be marked by different coloured arm-bands. The chorus, which should not consist of more than three persons, wear similar and distinctive clothing.*]

[*Enter Trudy and Walter.*]

*T.* You've only just heard?

*W.* Yes. A breakdown at the Mill needed attention, kept me all morning. I guessed no harm. But lately, riding at leisure, Dick met me, panted disaster. I came here at once. How did they get him?

*T.* In Kettledale above Colefangs road passes where high banks overhang dangerous from ambush. To Colefangs had to go, would speak with Layard, Jerry and Hunter with him only. They must have stolen news, for Red Shaw waited with ten, so Jerry said, till for last time unconscious. Hunter was killed at first shot. They fought, exhausted ammunition, a brave defence but fight to more.

*W.* Has Joan been told yet?

*T.* Yes. It couldn't be helped. Shock, starting birth pangs, caused a premature delivery.

*W.* How is she?

*T.* Bad, I believe. But here's the doctor.

[*Enter Doctor.*]

Well, Doctor, how are things going?

*D.* Better, thanks. We've had a hard fight, but it's going to be all right. She'll pull through and have a fine infant as well. My God, I'm thirsty after all that. Where can I get a drink?

*W.* Here in the next room, Doctor.

[*Exeunt. Back curtains draw. Joan with child and corpse.*]

*J.* Not from this life, not from this life is any
To keep; sleep, day and play would not help there
Dangerous to new ghost; new ghost learns from many
Learns from old termers what death is, where.

Who's jealous of his latest company
From one day to the next final to us,
A changed one; would use sorrow to deny
Sorrow, to replace death; sorrow is sleeping thus.

Unforgetting is not to-day's forgetting
For yesterday, not bedrid scorning,
But a new begetting
An unforgiving morning.

[*Baby squeals.*]

O see, he is impatient
To pass beyond this pretty lisping time:
There'll be some crying out when he's come there.

[*Back curtains close.*]

*Chorus.* Can speak of trouble, pressure on men
Born all the time, brought forward into light
For warm dark moan.
Though heart fears all heart cries for, rebuffs with mortal beat
Skyfall, the legs sucked under, adder's bite.
That prize held out of reach
Guides the unwilling tread,
The asking breath,
Till on attended bed
Or in untracked dishonour comes to each
His natural death.

We pass our days
Speak, man to men, easy, learning to point
To jump before ladies, to show our scars:
But no
We were mistaken, these faces are not ours.
They smile no more when we smile back:
Eyes, ears, tongue, nostrils bring
News of revolt, inadequate counsel to
An infirm king.

O watcher in the dark, you wake
Our dream of waking, we feel
Your finger on the flesh that has been skinned,
By your bright day
See clear what we were doing, that we were vile.
Your sudden hand
Shall humble great
Pride, break it, wear down to stumps old systems which await
The last transgression of the sea.

[*Enter John Nower and Dick.*]

*J.* If you have really made up your mind, Dick, I won't try and persuade you to stop. But I shall be sorry to lose you.

*D.* I have thought it all over, and I think it is the best thing to do. My cousin writes that the ranch is a thoroughly good proposition. I don't know how I shall like the Colonies but I feel I must get away from here. There is not room enough . . . but the actual moving is unpleasant.

*J.* I understand. When are you thinking of sailing?

*D.* My cousin is sailing to-morrow. If I am going I am to join him at the Docks.

*J.* Right. Tell one of the men to go down to the post-office and send a wire for you. If you want anything else, let me know.

*D.* Thank you.

[*Exit Dick. Enter Zeppel.*]

*Z.* Number Six wishes to see you, sir.

*J.* All right, show him in.

[*Enter Number Six.*]

Well, what is it?

6. My area is Rookhope. Last night at Horse and Farrier drank alone, one of Shaw's men. I sat down friendly next,

till muzzed with drink and lateness he was blabbing. Red Shaw goes to Brandon Walls to-day, visits a woman.

*J.* Alone?

6. No, sir. He takes a few. I got no numbers.

*J.* This is good news. Here is a pound for you.

6. Thank you very much, sir.

[*Exit Number Six.*]

*J.* Zeppel.

*Z.* Sir.

*J.* Ask George to come here at once.

*Z.* Very good, sir.

[*John gets a map out. Enter George.*]

*J.* Red Shaw is spending the day at Brandon Walls. We must get him. You know the ground well, don't you, George?

*G.* Pretty well. Let me see the map. There's a barn about a hundred yards from the house. Yes, here it is. If we can occupy that without attracting attention it will form a good base for operations, commands both house and road. If I remember rightly, on the other side of the stream is a steep bank. Yes, you can see from the contours. They couldn't get out that way, but lower down is marshy ground and possible. You want to post some men there to catch those who try.

*J.* Good. Who do you suggest to lead that party?

*G.* Send Sturton. He knows the whole district blindfold. He and I fished all those streams together.

*J.* I shall come with you. Let's see: it's dark now about five. Fortunately there's no moon and it's cloudy. Well start then about half-past. Pick your men and get some sandwiches made up in the kitchen. I'll see about the ammunition if you will remember to bring a compass. We meet outside at a quarter past.

[*Exeunt. Enter Kurt and Culley.*]

*K.* There's time for a quick one before changing. What's yours?

*C.* I'll have a sidecar, thanks.

*K.* Zeppel, one sidecar and one C.P.S. I hear Chapman did the lake in eight.

*C.* Yes, he is developing a very pretty style. I am not sure though that Pepys won't beat him next year if he can get out of that double kick. Thanks. Prosit.

*K.* Cheerio.

[*Enter Walter and Trudy.*]

*W.* Two half pints, Zeppel, please. (*To Kurt.*) Can you let me have a match? How is the Rugger going?

*K.* All right, thank you. We have not got a bad team this season.

*W.* Where do you play yourself?

*K.* Wing 3Q.

*W.* Did you ever see Warner? No, he'd be before your time. You remember him don't you, Trudy?

*T.* He was killed in the fight at Colefangs, wasn't he?

*W.* You are muddling him up with Hunter. He was the best three-quarter I have ever seen. His sprinting was marvellous to watch.

*Z.* (*producing Christmas turkey*). Not bad eh?

*T.* (*feeling it*). Oh a fine one. For to-morrow's dinner?

*Z.* Yes. Here, puss . . . gobble, gobble . . .

*T.* (*to W.*). What have you got Ingo for Christmas?

*W.* A model crane. Do you think he will like it?

*T.* He loves anything mechanical. He's so excited he can't sleep.

*K.* Come on, Culley, finish your drink. We must be getting along. (*To W.*) You must come down to the field on Monday and see us.

*W.* I will if I can.

[*Exit Kurt and Culley.*]

*T.* Is there any news yet?

*W.* Nothing has come through. If things are going right they may be back any time now.

*T.* I suppose they will get him?

*W.* It's almost certain. Nower has waited long enough.

*T.* I am sick of this feud. What do we want to go on killing each other for?

We are all the same. He's trash, yet if I cut my finger it bleeds like his.

But he's swell, keeps double shifts working all night by flares. His mother squealed like a pig when he came crouching out.

Sometimes we read a sign, cloud in the sky,
The wet tracks of a hare, quicken the step
Promise the best day. But here no remedy
Is to be thought of, no news but the new death;
A Nower dragged out in the night, a Shaw
Ambushed behind the wall. Blood on the ground
Would welcome fighters. Last night at Hammergill
A boy was born fanged like a weasel. I am old,
Shall die before next winter, but more than once shall hear
The cry for help, the shooting round the house.

*W.* The best are gone.
Often the man, alone shut, shall consider
The killings in old winters, death of friends.
Sitting with stranger shall expect no good.
Spring came, urging to ships, a casting off,
But one would stay, vengeance not done; it seemed
Doubtful to them that they would meet again.

Fording in the cool of the day they rode
To meet at crossroads when the year was over:
Dead is Brody, such a man was Maul.

I will say this not falsely; I have seen
The just and the unjust die in the day,
All, willing or not, and some were willing.

Here they are.

[*Enter Nower, George, Sturton and others. The three speak alternately.*]

Day was gone Night covered sky
Black over earth When we came there
To Brandon Walls Where Red Shaw lay
Hateful and sleeping Unfriendly visit.
I wished to revenge Quit fully
Who my father at Colefangs valley
Lying in ambush Cruelly shot
With life for life.

Then watchers saw they were attacked
Shouted in fear A night alarm
To men asleep Doomed men awoke
Felt for their guns Ran to the doors
Would wake their master Who lay with woman
Upstairs together Tired after love.
He saw then There would be shooting
Hard fight.

Shot answered shot Bullets screamed
Guns shook Hot in the hand
Fighters lay Groaning on ground
Gave up life Edward fell
Shot through the chest First of our lot
By no means refused fight Stephen was good
His first encounter Showed no fear
Wounded many,

Then Shaw knew We were too strong
Would get away Over the moor
Return alive But found at the ford
Sturton waiting Greatest gun anger
There he died Nor any came
Fighters home Nor wives shall go
Smiling to bed They boast no more.

[*Stephen suddenly gets up.*]

*S.* A forward forward can never be a backward backward.

*G.* Help me put Stephen to bed, somebody. He got tight on the way back. Hullo, they've caught a spy.

*Voices outside:* Look out. There he is. Catch him. Got you.

[*Enter Kurt and others with prisoner.*]

*K.* We found this chap hiding in an outhouse.

*J.* Bring him here. Who are you?

*S.* I know him. I saw him once at Eickhamp. He's Seth Shaw's brother.

*J.* He is, is he. What do you come here for? You know what we do to spies. I'll destroy the whole lot of you. Take him out.

*Spy.* You may look big, but we'll get you one day, Nower.

[*Exeunt all but John, Stephen following.*]

*S.* Don't go, darling.

[*John sits. A shot outside followed by cheers.*]

[*Enter Zeppel.*]

*Z.* Will you be wanting anything more to-night, Sir?

*J.* No, that will be all thank you.

*Z.* Good night, sir.

*John.* Always the following wind of history
Of others' wisdom makes a buoyant air

Till we come suddenly on pockets where
Is nothing loud but us; where voices seem
Abrupt, untrained, competing with no lie
Our fathers shouted once. They taught us war,
To scamper after darlings, to climb hills,
To emigrate from weakness, find ourselves
The easy conquerors of empty bays:
But never told us this, left each to learn,
Hear something of that soon-arriving day
When to gaze longer and delighted on
A face or idea be impossible.
Could I have been some simpleton that lived
Before disaster sent his runners here;
Younger than worms, worms have too much to bear.
Yes, mineral were best: could I but see
These woods, these fields of green, this lively world
Sterile as moon.

*Chorus.* The Spring unsettles sleeping partnerships,
Foundries improve their casting process, shops
Open a further wing on credit till
The winter. In summer boys grow tall
With running races on the froth-wet sand,
War is declared there, here a treaty signed;
Here a scrum breaks up like a bomb, there troops
Deploy like birds. But proudest into traps
Have fallen. These gears which ran in oil for week
By week, needing to look, now will not work;
Those manors mortgaged twice to pay for love
Go to another.
O how shall man live
Whose thought is born, child of one farcical night,
To find him old? The body warm but not
By choice, he dreams of folk in dancing bunches,
Of tart wine spilt on home-made benches,
Where learns, one drawn apart, a secret will

Restore the dead; but comes thence to a wall.
Outside on frozen soil lie armies killed
Who seem familiar but they are cold.
Now the most solid wish he tries to keep
His hands show through; he never will look up,
Say 'I am good'. On him misfortune falls
More than enough. Better where no one feels,
The out-of-sight, buried too deep for shafts.

[*Enter Father Christmas. He speaks to the audience.*]

*X.* Ladies and Gentlemen: I should like to thank you all very much for coming here to-night. Now we have a little surprise for you. When you go home, I hope you will tell your friends to come and bring the kiddies, but you will remember to keep this a secret, won't you? Thank you. Now I will not keep you waiting any longer.

[*Lights. A trial. John as the accuser. The Spy as accused. Joan as his warder with a gigantic feeding bottle. Xmas as president, the rest as jury, wearing school caps.*]

*X.* Is there any more evidence?

*J.* Yes. I know we have and are making terrific sacrifices, but we cannot give in. We cannot betray the dead. As we pass their graves can we be deaf to the simple eloquence of their inscriptions, those who in the glory of their early manhood gave up their lives for us? No, we must fight to the finish.

*X.* Very well. Call the witness.

[*Enter Bo.*]

*B.* In these days during the migrations, days
Freshening with rain reported from the mountains,
By loss of memory we are reborn,
For memory is death; by taking leave,
Parting in anger and glad to go
Where we are still unwelcome, and if we count

What dead the tides wash in, only to make
Notches for enemies. On northern ridges
Where flags fly, seen and lost, denying rumour
We baffle proof, speakers of a strange tongue.

[*The Spy groans. His cries are produced by jazz instruments at the back of the stage. Joan brandishes her bottle.*]

*Joan.* Be quiet, or I'll give you a taste of this.

*X.* Next, please.

[*Enter Po.*]

*P.* Past victory is honour, to accept
An island governorship, back to estates
Explored as child; coming at last to love
Lost publicly, found secretly again
In private flats, admitted to a sign.
An understanding sorrow knows no more,
Sits waiting for the lamp, far from those hills
Where rifts open unfenced, mark of a fall,
And flakes fall softly softly burying
Deeper and deeper down her loving son.

[*The Spy groans. John produces a revolver.*]

*J.* Better to get it over.

*Joan.* This way for the Angel of Peace.

*X.* Leave him alone. This fellow is very very ill.
But he will get well.

[*The Man-Woman appears as a prisoner of war behind barbed wire, in the snow.*]

*M-W.* Because I'm come it does not mean to hold
An anniversary, think illness healed,
As to renew the lease, consider costs
Of derelict ironworks on deserted coasts.
Love was not love for you but episodes,
Traffic in memoirs, views from different sides;

Yet thought oaths of comparison a bond,
And though you had your orders to disband,
Refused to listen, but remained in woods
Poorly concealed your profits under wads.
Nothing was any use; therefore I went
Hearing you call for what you did not want.
I lay with you; you made that an excuse
For playing with yourself, but homesick because
Your mother told you that's what flowers did,
And thought you lived since you were bored, not dead,
And could not stop. So I was cold to make
No difference, but you were quickly meek
Altered for safety. I tried then to demand
Proud habits, protestations called you mind
To show you it was extra, but instead
You overworked yourself, misunderstood,
Adored me for the chance. Lastly I tried
To teach you acting, but always you had nerves
To fear performances as some fear knives.
Now I shall go. No, you, if you come,
Will not enjoy yourself, for where I am
All talking is forbidden. . . .

[*The Spy groans.*]

*J.* I can't bear it.

[*Shoots him. Lights out.*]

*Voices.* Quick, fetch a doctor.
Ten pounds for a doctor.
Ten pounds to keep him away.
Coming, coming.

[*Lights. Xmas, John and the Spy remain. The Jury has gone, but there is a Photographer.*]

*X.* Stand back there. Here comes the doctor.

[*Enter Doctor and his Boy.*]

*B.* Tickle your arse with a feather, sir.

*D.* What's that?

*B.* Particularly nasty weather, sir.

*D.* Yes, it is. Tell me, is my hair tidy? One must always be careful with a new client.

*B.* It's full of lice, sir.

*D.* What's that?

*B.* It's looking nice, sir. [*For the rest of the scene the boy fools about.*]

*X.* Are you the doctor?

*D.* I am.

*X.* What can you cure?

*D.* Tennis elbow, Graves' Disease, Derbyshire neck and Housemaid's knees.

*X.* Is that all you can cure?

*D.* No, I have discovered the origin of life. Fourteen months I hesitated before I concluded this diagnosis. I received the morning star for this. My head will be left at death for clever medical analysis. The laugh will be gone and the microbe in command.

*X.* Well, let's see what you can do.

[*Doctor takes circular saws, bicycle pumps, etc., from his bag.*]

*B.* You need a pill, sir.

*D.* What's that.

*B.* You'll need your skill, sir. O sir you're hurting.

[*Boy is kicked out.*]

[*John tries to get a look.*]

*D.* Go away. Your presence will be necessary at Scotland Yard when the criminals of the war are tried, but your evidence will not be needed. It is valueless. Cages will be provided for some of the more interesting specimens. [*Examines the body.*] Um, yes. Very interesting. The conscious brain ap-

pears normal except under emotion. Fancy it. The Devil couldn't do that. This advances and retreats under control and poisons everything round it. My diagnosis is: Adamant will, cool brain and laughing spirit. Hullo, what's this? [*Produces a large pair of pliers and extracts an enormous tooth from the body.*] Come along, that's better. Ladies and Gentlemen, you see I have nothing up my sleeve. This tooth was growing ninety-nine years before his great grandmother was born. If it hadn't been taken out to-day he would have died yesterday. You may get up now.

[*The Spy gets up. The Photographer gets ready.*]

*P.* Just one minute, please. A little brighter, a little brighter. No, moisten the lips and start afresh. Hold it.

[*Photographer lets off his flash. Lights out. Xmas blows a whistle.*]

*X.* All change.

[*Lights. Spy behind a gate guarded by Xmas. Enter John running.*]

*J.* I'm late, I'm late. Which way is it? I must hurry.

*X.* You can't come in here, without a pass.

[*John turns back his coat lapel.*]

*X.* O I beg your pardon, sir. This way, sir.

[*Exit Xmas. The Accuser and Accused plant a tree.*]

*John.* Sametime sharers of the same house
We know not the builder nor the name of his son.
Now cannot mean to then; boy's voice among
dishonour portraits
To dockside barmaid speaking
Sorry through wires, pretended speech.

*Spy.* Escaped
Armies pursuit, rebellion and eclipse
Together in a cart
After all journeys
We stay and are not known.

[*Lights out.*]

Sharers of the same house
Attendants on the same machine
Rarely a word, in silence understood.

[*Lights. John alone in his chair. Enter Dick.*]

*D.* Hullo. I've come to say good-bye.
Yesterday we sat at table together
Fought side by side at enemies face to face meeting
To-day we take our leave, time of departure.
I'm sorry.

*J.* Here, give me your knife and take mine. By these
We may remember each other.
There are two chances, but more of one
Parting for ever, not hearing the other
Though he need help.
Have you got everything you want?

*D.* Yes, thanks. Good-bye, John.

*J.* Good-bye.

[*Exit Dick.*]

There is the city,
Lighted and clean once, pleasure for builders
And I
Letting to cheaper tenants, have made a slum
Houses at which the passer shakes his fist
Remembering evil.
Pride and indifference have shared with me, and I
Have kissed them in the dark, for mind has dark,
Shaded commemorations, midnight accidents
In streets where heirs may dine.

But love, sent east for peace
From tunnels under those

Bursts now to pass
On trestles over meaner quarters
A noise and flashing glass.

Feels morning streaming down
Wind from the snows
Nowise withdrawn by doubting flinch
Nor joined to any by belief's firm flange
Refreshed sees all
The tugged-at teat
The hopper's steady feed, the frothing leat.
Zeppel.

[*Enter Zeppel.*]

*Z.* Sir.

*J.* Get my horse ready at once, please.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Chorus.* To throw away the key and walk away
Not abrupt exile, the neighbours asking why,
But following a line with left and right
An altered gradient at another rate
Learns more than maps upon the whitewashed wall
The hand put up to ask; and makes us well
Without confession of the ill. All pasts
Are single old past now, although some posts
Are forwarded, held looking on a new view;
The future shall fulfil a surer vow
Not smiling at queen over the glass rim
Nor making gunpowder in the top room,
Not swooping at the surface still like gulls
But with prolonged drowning shall develop gills.

But there are still to tempt; are as not seen
Because of blizzards or an erring sign
Whose guessed at wonders would be worth alleging,

And lies about the cost of a night's lodging.
Travellers may sleep at inns but not attach,
They sleep one night together, not asked to touch;
Receive no normal welcome, not the pressed lip,
Children to lift, not the assuaging lap.
Crossing the pass descend the growing stream
Too tired to hear except the pulses' strum,
Reach villages to ask for a bed in
Rock shutting out the sky, the old life done.

[*Culley enters right and squats in the centre of the stage, looking left through field glasses. Several shots are heard off. Enter George and Kurt.*]

*G.* Are you much hurt?

*K.* Nothing much, sir. Only a slight flesh wound. Did you get him, sir?

*G.* On ledge above the gulley, aimed at, seen moving, fell; looked down on, sprawls in the stream.

*K.* Good. He sniped poor Billy last Easter, riding to Flash.

*G.* I have some lint and bandages in my haversack, and there is a spring here. I'll dress your arm.

[*Enter Seth finds Bernard, left.*]

*S.* Did you find Tom's body?

B. Yes, sir. It's lying in the Hangs.

S. Which way did they go?

B. Down there, sir.

[*Culley observes them and runs right.*]

*C.* There are twenty men from Nattrass, sir, over the gap, coming at once.

*G.* Have they seen us?

*C.* Not yet.

*G.* We must get out. You go down to the copse and make for the Barbon road. We'll follow the old tramway. Keep low and run like hell.

[*Exeunt right. Seth watches through field glasses.*]

*S.* Yes. No. No. Yes, I can see them. They are making for the Barbon road. Go down and cut them off. There is good cover by the bridge. We've got them now.

[*A whistle. The back curtains draw, showing John, Anne and Aaron and the Announcer grouped. Both sides enter left and right.*]

*Aa.* There is a time for peace; too often we
Have gone on cold marches, have taken life,
Till wrongs are bred like flies; the dreamer wakes
Who beats a smooth door, behind footsteps, on the left
The pointed finger, the unendurable drum,
To hear of horses stolen or a house burned.
Now this shall end with marriage as it ought:
Love turns the wind, brings up the salt smell,
Shadow of gulls on the road to the sea.

*Announcer.* The engagement is announced of John Nower, eldest son of the late Mr. and Mrs. George Nower of Lintzgarth, Rockhope, and Anne Shaw, only daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Shaw of Nattrass, Garrigill.

*All.* Hurrah.

[*George and Seth advance to the centre, shake hands and cross over to the stage to their opposite sides. Back curtains close. Exeunt in different directions, talking as they go.*]

*G.* It was a close shave that time. We had a lucky escape. How are you feeling?

*K.* The arm is rather painful. I owe Bernard one for that.

*B.* It's a shame. Just when we had them fixed.

*S.* Don't you worry. You'll get your chance.

*B.* But what about this peace?

*S.* That remains to be seen. Only wait.

[*Exeunt. Back curtains draw. John and Anne alone. John blows on a grass held between the thumbs and listens.*]

*J.* On Cautley where a peregrine has rested, iced heather hurt the knuckles. Fell on the ball near time, the forward stopped. Good-bye now, he said, would open the swing doors. . . . These I remember, but not love till now. We cannot tell where we shall find it, though we all look for it till we do, and what others tell us is no use to us.

Some say that handsome raider still at large,
A terror to the Marshes, is truth in love;
And we must listen for such messengers
To tell us daily 'To-day a saint came blessing
The huts.' 'Seen lately in the provinces
Reading behind a tree and people passing.'
But love returns;
At once all heads are turned this way, and love
Calls order—silenced the angry sons—
Steps forward, greets, repeats what he has heard
And seen, feature for feature, word for word.

*Anne.* Yes, I am glad this evening that we are together.
The silence is unused, death seems
An axe's echo.
The summer quickens all,
Scatters its promises
To you and me no less
Though neither can compel.

*J.* The wish to last the year
The longest look to live,
The urgent word survive
The movement of the air.

*A.* But loving now let none
Think of divided days
When we shall choose from ways,
All of them evil, one.

*J.* Look on with stricter brows
The sacked and burning town,

The ice-sheet moving down,
The fall of an old house.

*A.* John, I have a car waiting. There is time to join Dick before the boat sails. We sleep in beds where men have died howling.

*J.* You may be right, but we shall stay.

*A.* To-night the many come to mind
Sent forward in the thaw with anxious marrow
For such might now return with a bleak face,
An image pause half-lighted in the door,
A greater but not fortunate in all;
Come home deprived of an astonishing end . . .
Morgan's who took a clean death in the north
Shouting against the wind, or Cousin Dodd's,
Passed out in her chair, the snow falling.
The too-loved clays, born ever by diverse drifts,
Fallen upon the far side of all enjoyment,
Unable to move closer, shall not speak

. . .

Out of that grave stern on no capital fault;
Enough to have lightly touched the unworthy thing.

*J.* We live still.

*A.* But what has become of the dead? They forget.

*J.* These. Smilers, all who stand on promontories, slinkers, whisperers, deliberate approaches, echoes, time, promises of mercy, what dreams or goes masked, embraces that fail, insufficient evidence, touches of the old wound.
But let us not think of things which we hope will be long in coming.

*Chorus.* The Spring will come,
Not hesitate for one employer who
Though a fine day and every pulley running
Would quick lie down; nor save the wanted one
That, wounded in escaping, swam the lake
Safe to the reeds, collapsed in shallow water.

You have tasted good and what is it? For you,
Sick in the green plain, healed in the tundra, shall
Turn westward back from your alone success,
Under a dwindling Alp to see your friends
Cut down the wheat.

*J.* It's getting cold dear, let's go in.

[*Exeunt. Back curtains close.*]

*Chorus.* For where are Basley who won the Ten,
Dickon so tarted by the House,
Thomas who kept a sparrow-hawk?

The clock strikes, it is time to go,
The tongue ashamed, deceived by a shake of the hand.

[*Enter Bridal Party left, guests right.*]

*Guests.* Ssh.

[*The Chief Guest comes forward and presents a bouquet to the bride.*]

*C.G.* With gift in hand we come
From every neighbour farm
To celebrate in wine
The certain union of
A woman and a man;
And may their double love
Be shown to the stranger's eye
In a son's symmetry.
Now hate is swallowed down,
All anger put away;
The spirit comes to its own,
The beast to its play.

[*All clap. The Chief Guest addresses the Audience.*]

*C.G.* Will any lady be so kind as to oblige us with a dance? . . . Thank you very much. . . . This way miss. . . . What tune would you like?

[*Gramophone. A dance. As the dance ends, the back curtains draw and the Butler enters centre.*]

*Butler.* Dinner is served.

[*Aaron goes to the Dancer.*]

*Aa.* You'll dine with us, of course?

[*Exeunt all except Seth and his Mother.*]

[*Guests, as they go out.*] It will be a good year for them, I think.
You don't mean that he . . . well, you know what.
Rather off his form lately.
The vein is showing good in the Quarry Hazel.
One of Edward's friends.
You must come and have a look at the Kennels some day.
Well it does seem to show.
[*Etc., etc.*]

[*Back curtains close.*]

*Mother.* Seth.

*S.* Yes, Mother.

*M.* John Nower is here.

*S.* I know that. What do you want me to do?

*M.* Kill him.

*S.* I can't do that. There is peace now; besides he is a guest in our house.

*M.* Have you forgotten your brother's death . . . taken out and shot like a dog? It is a nice thing for me to hear people saying that I have a coward for a son. I am thankful your father is not here to see it.

*S.* I'm not afraid of anything or anybody, but I don't want to.

*M.* I shall have to take steps.

*S.* It shall be as you like. Though I think that much will come of this, chiefly harm.

*M.* I have thought of that. [*Exit.*]

*S.* The little funk. Sunlight on sparkling water, its shades dis-

solved, reforming, unreal activity where others laughed but he blubbed clinging, homesick, and undeveloped form. I'll do it. Men point in after days. He always was. But wrongly. He fought and overcame, a stern self-ruler. You didn't hear. Hearing they look ashamed too late for shaking hands. Of course I'll do it. [*Exit.*]

[*A shot. More shots. Shouting.*]

*Voices.* A trap. I might have known.
*outside.* Take that, damn you.
Open the window.
You swine.
Jimmy, O my God.

[*Enter Seth and Bernard.*]

*B.* The Master's killed. So is John Nower, but some of them got away, fetching help, will attack in an hour.
*S.* See that all the doors are bolted.

[*Exeunt right and left. The back curtains draw. Anne with the dead.*]

*Anne.* Now we have seen the story to its end.
The hands that were to help will not be lifted,
And bad followed by worse leaves to us tears,
An empty bed, hope from less noble men.
I had seen joy
Received and given, upon both sides, for years.
Now not.

*Chorus.* Though he believe it, no man is strong.

He thinks to be called the fortunate,
To bring home a wife, to live long.

But he is defeated; let the son
Sell the farm lest the mountain fall;
His mother and her mother won.

His fields are used up where the moles visit,
The contours worn flat; if there show
Passage for water he will miss it:

Give up his breath, his woman, his team;
No life to touch, though later there be
Big fruit, eagles above the stream.

CURTAIN

# PART THREE



# *Songs and Other Musical Pieces*

# *I*

As I walked out one evening,
  Walking down Bristol Street,
The crowds upon the pavement
  Were fields of harvest wheat.

And down by the brimming river
  I heard a lover sing
Under an arch of the railway:
  'Love has no ending.

'I'll love you, dear, I'll love you
  Till China and Africa meet,
And the river jumps over the mountain
  And the salmon sing in the street.

'I'll love you till the ocean
  Is folded and hung up to dry
And the seven stars go squawking
  Like geese about the sky.

The years shall run like rabbits,
  For in my arms I hold
The Flower of the Ages,
  And the first love of the world.'

But all the clocks in the city
  Began to whirr and chime:
'O let not Time deceive you,
  You cannot conquer Time.

'In the burrows of the Nightmare
  Where Justice naked is,
Time watches from the shadow
  And coughs when you would kiss.

'In headaches and in worry
  Vaguely life leaks away,
And Time will have his fancy
  To-morrow or to-day.

'Into many a green valley
  Drifts the appalling snow;
Time breaks the threaded dances
  And the diver's brilliant bow.

'O plunge your hands in water,
  Plunge them in up to the wrist;
Stare, stare in the basin
  And wonder what you've missed.

'The glacier knocks in the cupboard,
  The desert sighs in the bed,
And the crack in the tea-cup opens
  A lane to the land of the dead.

'Where the beggars raffle the banknotes
  And the Giant is enchanting to Jack,
And the Lily-white Boy is a Roarer,
  And Jill goes down on her back.

'O look, look in the mirror,
  O look in your distress;
Life remains a blessing
  Although you cannot bless.

'O stand, stand at the window
  As the tears scald and start;
You shall love your crooked neighbour
  With your cro oked heart'.

It was late, late in the evening,
The lovers they were gone;
The clocks had ceased their chiming,
And the deep river ran on.

## *II*

At last the secret is out, as it always must come in the end,
The delicious story is ripe to tell to the intimate friend;
Over the tea-cups and in the square the tongue has its desire;
Still waters run deep, my dear, there's never smoke
without fire.

Behind the corpse in the reservoir, behind the ghost on
the links,
Behind the lady who dances and the man who madly drinks,
Under the look of fatigue, the attack of migraine and
the sigh
There is always another story, there is more than meets
the eye.

For the clear voice suddenly singing, high up in the
convent wall,
The scent of elder bushes, the sporting prints in the hall,
The croquet matches in summer, the handshake, the cough,
the kiss,
There is always a wicked secret, a private reason for this.

## *III**

Carry her over the water,
And set her down under the tree,
Where the culvers white all day and all night,
And the winds from every quarter
Sing agreeably, agreeably, agreeably of love.

Put a gold ring on her finger,
  And press her close to your heart,
While the fish in the lake their snapshots take,
  And the frog, that sanguine singer,
Sings agreeably, agreeably, agreeably of love.

The streets shall all flock to your marriage,
  The houses turn round to look,
The tables and chairs say suitable prayers,
  And the horses drawing your carriage
Sing agreeably, agreeably, agreeably of love.

## *IV*

Dear, though the night is gone,
Its dream still haunts to-day,
That brought us to a room
Cavernous, lofty as
A railway terminus,
And crowded in that gloom
Were beds, and we in one
In a far corner lay.

Our whisper woke no clocks,
We kissed and I was glad
At everything you did,
Indifferent to those
Who sat with hostile eyes
In pairs on every bed,
Arms round each other's neck,
Inert and vaguely sad.

O but what worm of guilt
Or what malignant doubt
Am I the victim of,

That you then, unabashed,
Did what I never wished,
Confessed another love;
And I, submissive, felt
Unwanted and went out?

## *V**

Eyes look into the well,
Tears run down from the eye;
The tower cracked and fell
From the quiet winter sky.

Under the midnight stone
Love was buried by thieves;
The robbed heart begs for a bone,
The damned rustle like leaves.

Face down in the flooded brook
With nothing more to say,
Lies One the soldiers took,
And spoiled and threw away.

## *VI*

Fish in the unruffled lakes
The swarming colours wear,
Swans in the winter air
A white perfection have,
And the great lion walks
Through his innocent grove;
Lion, fish, and swan
Act, and are gone
Upon Time's toppling wave.

We till shadowed days are done,
We must weep and sing
Duty's conscious wrong,
The Devil in the clock,
The Goodness carefully worn
For atonement or for luck;
We must lose our loves,
On each beast and bird that moves
Turn an envious look.

Sighs for folly said and done
Twist our narrow days;
But I must bless, I must praise
That you, my swan, who have
All gifts that to the swan
Impulsive Nature gave,
The majesty and pride,
Last night should add
Your voluntary love.

## *VII**

'Gold in the North,' came the blizzard to say,
I left my sweetheart at the break of day,
The gold ran out and my love turned grey.
*You don't know all, sir, you don't know all.*

'The West,' said the sun, 'for enterprise,'
A bullet in Frisco put me wise,
My last words were 'God damn your eyes.'
*You don't know all, sir, you don't know all.*

In the streets of New York I was young and swell,
I rode the market, the market fell,
One morning I found myself in hell,
*You don't know all, sir, you don't know all.*

In Alabama my heart was full,
Down by the river bank I stole,
The waters of grief went over my soul,
*You don't know all, ma'am, you don't know all.*

In the saloons I heaved a sigh,
Lost in deserts of alkali I lay down to die;
There's always a sorrow can get you down,
All the world's whiskey won't ever drown.

Some think they're strong, some think they're smart,
Like butterflies they're pulled apart,
America can break your heart.
*You don't know all, sir, you don't know all.*

## *VIII**

### *Song for St. Cecilia's Day*

I

In a garden shady this holy lady
With reverent cadence and subtle psalm.
Like a black swan as death came on
Poured forth her song in perfect calm:
And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin
Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer,
And notes tremendous from her great engine
Thundered out on the Roman air.

Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited,
Moved to delight by the melody,
White as an orchid she rode quite naked
In an oyster shell on top of the sea;
At sounds so entrancing the angels dancing
Came out of their trance into time again,
And around the wicked in Hell's abysses
The huge flame flickered and eased their pain.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions*
*To all musicians, appear and inspire:*
*Translated Daughter, come down and startle*
*Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

II

I cannot grow;
I have no shadow
To run away from,
I only play.

I cannot err;
There is no creature
Whom I belong to,
Whom I could wrong.

I am defeat
When it knows it
Can now do nothing
By suffering.

All you lived through,
Dancing because you
No longer need it
For any deed.

I shall never be
Different. Love me.

III

O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
O calm spaces unafraid of weight,
Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all
The gaucheness of her adolescent state,

Where Hope within the altogether strange
From every outworn image is released,
And Dread born whole and normal like a beast
Into a world of truths that never change:
Restore our fallen day; O re-arrange.

*O dear white children casual as birds,*
*Playing among the ruined languages,*
*So small beside their large confusion words,*
*So gay against the greater silences*
*Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head,*
*Impetuous child with the tremendous brain,*
*O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain,*
*Lost innocence who wished your lover dead,*
*Weep for the lives your wishes never led.*

O cry created as the bow of sin
Is drawn across our trembling violin.
*O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain.*
O law drummed out by hearts against the still
Long winter of our intellectual will.
*That what has been may never be again,*
O flute that throbs with the thanksgiving breath
Of convalescents on the shores of death.
*O bless the freedom that you never chose.*
O trumpets that unguarded children blow
About the fortress of their inner foe.
*O wear your tribulation like a rose.*

## *IX**

Jumbled in the common box
Of their dark stupidity,
Orchid, swan, and Caesar lie;

Time that tires of everyone
Has corroded all the locks
Thrown away the key for fun.

In its cleft the torrent mocks
Prophets who in days gone by
Made a profit on each cry,
Persona grata now with none;
And a jackass language shocks
Poets who can only pun.

Silence settles on the clocks;
Nursing mothers point a sly
Index finger at a sky,
Crimson with the setting sun;
In the valley of the fox
Gleams the barrel of a gun.

Once we could have made the docks,
Now it is too late to fly;
Once too often you and I
Did what we should not have done;
Round the rampant rugged rocks
Rude and ragged rascals run.

## X*

Lady, weeping at the crossroads
Would you meet your love
In the twilight with his greyhounds,
And the hawk on his glove?

Bribe the birds then on the branches,
Bribe them to be dumb,
Stare the hot sun out of heaven
That the night may come.

Starless are the nights of travel,
Bleak the winter wind;
Run with terror all before you
And regret behind.

Run until you hear the ocean's
Everlasting cry;
Deep though it may be and bitter
You must drink it dry.

Wear out patience in the lowest
Dungeons of the sea,
Searching through the stranded shipwrecks
For the golden key.

Push on to the world's end, pay the
Dread guard with a kiss;
Cross the rotten bridge that totters
Over the abyss.

There stands the deserted castle
Ready to explore;
Enter, climb the marble staircase
Open the locked door.

Cross the silent empty ballroom,
Doubt and danger past;
Blow the cobwebs from the mirror
See yourself at last.

Put your hand behind the wainscot,
You have done your part;
Find the penknife there and plunge it
Into your false heart.

## *XI*

Lay your sleeping head, my love,
Human on my faithless arm;
Time and fevers burn away
Individual beauty from
Thoughtful children, and the grave
Proves the child ephemeral:
But in my arms till break of day
Let the living creature lie,
Mortal, guilty, but to me
The entirely beautiful.

Soul and body have no bounds:
To lovers as they lie upon
Her tolerant enchanted slope
In their ordinary swoon,
Grave the vision Venus sends
Of supernatural sympathy,
Universal love and hope;
While an abstract insight wakes
Among the glaciers and the rocks
The hermit's sensual ecstasy.

Certainty, fidelity
On the stroke of midnight pass
Like vibrations of a bell
And fashionable madmen raise
Their pedantic boring cry:
Every farthing of the cost,
All the dreaded cards foretell,
Shall be paid, but from this night
Not a whisper, not a thought,
Not a kiss nor look be lost.

Beauty, midnight, vision dies:
Let the winds of dawn that blow
Softly round your dreaming head
Such a day of sweetness show
Eye and knocking heart may bless,
Find the mortal world enough;
Noons of dryness see you fed
By the involuntary powers,
Nights of insult let you pass
Watched by every human love.

## *XII*

(*Tune: St. James's Infirmary*)

Let me tell you a little story
About Miss Edith Gee;
She lived in Clevedon Terrace
At Number 83.

She'd a slight squint in her left eye,
Her lips they were thin and small,
She had narrow sloping shoulders
And she had no bust at all.

She'd a velvet hat with trimmings,
And a dark grey serge costume;
She lived in Clevedon Terrace
In a small bed-sitting room.

She'd a purple mac for wet days,
A green umbrella too to take,
She'd a bicycle with shopping basket
And a harsh back-pedal brake.

The Church of Saint Aloysius
  Was not so very far;
She did a lot of knitting,
  Knitting for that Church Bazaar.

Miss Gee looked up at the starlight
  And said: 'Does anyone care
That I live in Clevedon Terrace
  On one hundred pounds a year?'

She dreamed a dream one evening
  That she was the Queen of France
And the Vicar of Saint Aloysius
  Asked Her Majesty to dance.

But a storm blew down the palace,
  She was biking through a field of corn,
And a bull with the face of the Vicar
  Was charging with lowered horn.

She could feel his hot breath behind her,
  He was going to overtake;
And the bicycle went slower and slower
  Because of that back-pedal brake.

Summer made the trees a picture,
  Winter made them a wreck;
She bicycled to the evening service
  With her clothes buttoned up to her neck.

She passed by the loving couples,
  She turned her head away;
She passed by the loving couples
  And they didn't ask her to stay.

Miss Gee sat down in the side-aisle,
  She heard the organ play;
And the choir it sang so sweetly
  At the ending of the day,

Miss Gee knelt down in the side-aisle,
  She knelt down on her knees;
'Lead me not into temptation
  But make me a good girl, please.'

The days and nights went by her
  Like waves round a Cornish wreck;
She bicycled down to the doctor
  With her clothes buttoned up to her neck.

She bicycled down to the doctor,
  And rang the surgery bell;
'O, doctor, I've a pain inside me,
  And I don't feel very well.'

Doctor Thomas looked her over,
  And then he looked some more;
Walked over to his wash-basin,
  Said, 'Why didn't you come before?'

Doctor Thomas sat over his dinner,
  Though his wife was waiting to ring;
Rolling his bread into pellets,
  Said, 'Cancer's a funny thing.

'Nobody knows what the cause is,
  Though some pretend they do;
It's like some hidden assassin
  Waiting to strike at you.

'Childless women get it,
And men when they retire;
It's as if there had to be some outlet
For their foiled creative fire.'

His wife she rang for the servant,
Said, 'Don't be so morbid, dear',
He said: 'I saw Miss Gee this evening
And she's a goner, I fear.'

They took Miss Gee to the hospital,
She lay there a total wreck,
Lay in the ward for women
With the bedclothes right up to her neck.

They laid her on the table,
The students began to laugh;
And Mr. Rose the surgeon
He cut Miss Gee in half.

Mr. Rose he turned to his students,
Said: 'Gentlemen, if you please,
We seldom see a sarcoma
As far advanced as this'.

They took her off the table,
They wheeled away Miss Gee
Down to another department
Where they study Anatomy.

They hung her from the ceiling,
Yes, they hung up Miss Gee;
And a couple of Oxford Groupers
Carefully dissected her knee.

## *XIII*

Let the florid music praise,
  The flute and the trumpet,
Beauty's conquest of your face:
In that land of flesh and bone,
Where from citadels on high
Her imperial standards fly,
    Let the hot sun
    Shine on, shine on.

O but the unloved have had power,
  The weeping and striking,
Always: time will bring their hour;
Their secretive children walk
Through your vigilance of breath
To unpardonable death,
    And my vows break
    Before his look.

## *XIV*

Look, stranger, on this island now
The leaping light for your delight discovers,
Stand stable here
And silent be,
That through the channels of the ear
May wander like a river
The swaying sound of the sea.

Here at the small field's ending pause
When the chalk wall falls to the foam and its tall ledges
Oppose the pluck
And knock of the tide,

And the shingle scrambles after the suck-
-ing surf,
And the gull lodges
A moment on its sheer side.

Far off like floating seeds the ships
Diverge on urgent voluntary errands,
And the full view
Indeed may enter
And move in memory as now these clouds do,
That pass the harbour mirror
And all the summer through the water saunter.

## *XV*

May with its light behaving
Stirs vessel, eye, and limb;
The singular and sad
Are willing to recover,
And to the swan-delighting river
The careless picnics come,
The living white and red.

The dead remote and hooded
In their enclosures rest; but we
From the vague woods have broken,
Forests where children meet
And the white angel-vampires flit;
We stand with shaded eye,
The dangerous apple taken.

The real world lies before us,
Animal motions of the young,
The common wish for death,

The pleasured and the haunted;
The dying master sinks tormented
In the admirers' ring;
The unjust walk the earth.

And love that makes impatient
The tortoise and the roe, and lays
The blonde beside the dark,
Urges upon our blood,
Before the evil and the good
How insufficient is
The endearment and the look.

## *XVI**

My second thoughts condemn
And wonder how I dare
To look you in the eye.
What right have I to swear
Even at one a.m.
To love you till I die?

Earth meets too many crimes
For fibs to interest her;
If I can give my word,
Forgiveness can recur
Any number of times
In Time. Which is absurd.

Tempus fugit. Quite.
So finish up your drink.
All flesh is grass. It is.
But who on earth can think
With heavy heart or light
Of what will come of this?

## *XVII*

Not, Father, further do prolong
  Our necessary defeat;
Spare us the numbing zero-hour,
  The desert-long retreat.

Against Your direct light, displayed,
  Regardant, absolute,
In person stubborn and oblique
  We set our maddened foot.

These nissen huts, if hide we could
  Your eye inseeing from,
Firm fenders were, but lo! to us
  Your loosened angers come.

Against Your accusations
  Though ready wit devise,
Nor magic countersigns prevail
  Nor airy sacrifice.

Weaker we are, and strict within
  Your organized blockade,
And from our desperate shore the last
  Few pallid youngsters fade.

Be not another than our hope;
  Expect we routed shall
Upon your peace; with ray disarm,
  Illumine, and not kill.

## *XVIII*

Now the leaves are falling fast,
Nurse's flowers will not last;
Nurses to the graves are gone,
And the prams go rolling on.

Whispering neighbours, left and right,
Pluck us from the real delight;
And the active hands must freeze
Lonely on the separate knees.

Dead in hundreds at the back
Follow wooden in our track,
Arms raised stiffly to reprove
In false attitudes of love.

Starving through the leafless wood
Trolls run scolding for their food;
And the nightingale is dumb,
And the angel will not come.

Cold, impossible, ahead
Lifts the mountain's lovely head
Whose white waterfall could bless
Travellers in their last distress.

## *XIX*

Now through night's caressing grip
Earth and all her oceans slip,
Capes of China slide away
From her fingers into day,
And the Americas incline
Coasts toward her shadow line.

Now the ragged vagrants creep
Into crooked holes to sleep;
Just and unjust, worst and best,
Change their places as they rest;
Awkward lovers lie in fields
Where disdainful beauty yields;
While the splendid and the proud
Naked stand before the crowd,
And the losing gambler gains,
And the beggar entertains.
May sleep's healing power extend
Through these hours to each friend;
Unpursued by hostile force
Traction engine bull or horse
Or revolting succubus;
Calmly till the morning break
Let them lie, then gently wake.

## *XX*

—'O for doors to be open and an invite with gilded edges
To dine with Lord Lobcock and Count Asthma on the platinum benches,
With somersaults and fireworks, the roast and the smacking kisses'—
Cried the cripples to the silent statue,
The six beggared cripples.

—'And Garbo's and Cleopatra's wits to go astraying,
In a feather ocean with me to go fishing and playing,
Still jolly when the cock has burst himself with crowing'—
Cried the cripples to the silent statue,
The six beggared cripples.

—'And to stand on green turf among the craning yellow faces
Dependent on the chestnut, the sable, and Arabian horses,
And me with a magic crystal to foresee their places'—
Cried the cripples to the silent statue.
The six beggared cripples.

—'And this square to be deck and these pigeons sails to rig,
And to follow the delicious breeze like a tantony pig
To the shaded feverless islands where the melons
are big'—
Cried the cripples to the silent statue,
The six beggared cripples.

—'And these shops to be turned to tulips in a garden bed,
And me with my crutch to thrash each merchant dead
As he pokes from a flower his bald and wicked head'—
Cried the cripples to the silent statue,
The six beggared cripples.

—'And a hole in the bottom of heaven, and Peter and Paul
And each smug surprised saint like parachutes to fall,
And every one-legged beggar to have no legs at all'—
Cried the cripples to the silent statue,
The six beggared cripples.

## *XXI*

O lurcher-loving collier, black as night,
Follow your love across the smokeless hill;
Your lamp is out and all the cages still;
Course for her heart and do not miss,
For Sunday soon is past and, Kate, fly not so fast,
For Monday comes when none may kiss:
Be marble to his soot, and to his black be white.

# *XXII*

O the valley in the summer where I and my John
Beside the deep river would walk on and on
While the flowers at our feet and the birds up above
Argued so sweetly on reciprocal love,
And I leaned on his shoulder; 'O Johnny, let's play':
But he frowned like thunder and he went away.

O that Friday near Christmas as I well recall
When we went to the Charity Matinee Ball,
The floor was so smooth and the band was so loud
And Johnny so handsome I felt so proud;
'Squeeze me tighter, dear Johnny, let's dance till it's day':
But he frowned like thunder and he went away.

Shall I ever forget at the Grand Opera
When music poured out of each wonderful star?
Diamonds and pearls they hung dazzling down
Over each silver or golden silk gown;
'O John I'm in heaven,' I whispered to say:
But he frowned like thunder and he went away.

O but he was as fair as a garden in flower,
As slender and tall as the great Eiffel Tower,
When the waltz throbbed out on the long promenade
O his eyes and his smile they went straight to my heart;
'O marry me, Johnny, I'll love and obey':
But he frowned like thunder and he went away.

O last night I dreamed of you, Johnny, my lover,
You'd the sun on one arm and the moon on the other,
The sea it was blue and the grass it was green,
Every star rattled a round tambourine;
Ten thousand miles deep in a pit there I lay:
But you frowned like thunder and you went away.

## *XXIII*

Over the heather the wet wind blows,
I've lice in my tunic and a cold in my nose.

The rain comes pattering out of the sky,
I'm a Wall soldier, I don't know why.

The mist creeps over the hard grey stone,
My girl's in Tungria; I sleep alone.

Aulus goes hanging around her place,
I don't like his manners, I don't like his face.

Piso's a Christian, he worships a fish;
There'd be no kissing if he had his wish.

She gave me a ring but I diced it away;
I want my girl and I want my pay.

When I'm a veteran with only one eye
I shall do nothing but look at the sky.

## *XXIV*

O what is that sound which so thrills the ear
  Down in the valley drumming, drumming?
Only the scarlet soldiers, dear,
  The soldiers coming.

O what is that light I see flashing so clear
  Over the distance brightly, brightly?
Only the sun on their weapons, dear,
  As they step lightly.

O what are they doing with all that gear,
  What are they doing this morning, this morning?
Only their usual manoeuvres, dear,
  Or perhaps a warning.

O why have they left the road down there,
  Why are they suddenly wheeling, wheeling?
Perhaps a change in their orders, dear.
  Why are you kneeling?

O haven't they stopped for the doctor's care,
  Haven't they reined their horses, their horses?
Why, they are none of them wounded, dear,
  None of these forces.

O is it the parson they want, with white hair,
  Is it the parson, is it, is it?
No, they are passing his gateway, dear,
  Without a visit.

O it must be the farmer who lives so near.
  It must be the farmer so cunning, so cunning?
They have passed the farmyard already, dear,
  And now they are running.

O where are you going? Stay with me here!
  Were the vows you swore deceiving, deceiving?
No, I promised to love you, dear,
  But I must be leaving.

O it's broken the lock and splintered the door,
  O it's the gate where they're turning, turning;
Their boots are heavy on the floor
  And their eyes are burning.

## *XXV*

'O where are you going?' said reader to rider,
'That valley is fatal when furnaces burn,
Yonder's the midden whose odours will madden,
That gap is the grave where the tall return.'

'O do you imagine,' said fearer to farer,
'That dusk will delay on your path to the pass,
Your diligent looking discover the lacking
Your footsteps feel from granite to grass?'

'O what was that bird,' said horror to hearer,
'Did you see that shape in the twisted trees?
Behind you swiftly the figure comes softly,
The spot on your skin is a shocking disease?'

'Out of this house'—said rider to reader,
'Yours never will'—said farer to fearer,
'They're looking for you'—said hearer to horror,
As he left them there, as he left them there.

## *XXVI*

'O who can ever gaze his fill,'
  Farmer and fisherman say,
'On native shore and local hill,
Grudge aching limb or callus on the hand?
Fathers, grandfathers stood upon this land,
And here the pilgrims from our loins shall stand.'
  So farmer and fisherman say
  In their fortunate heyday:
  But Death's soft answer drifts across
  Empty catch or harvest loss
    Or an unlucky May.

*The earth is an oyster with nothing inside it,*
*Not to be born is the best for man;*
*The end of toil is a bailiff's order,*
*Throw down the mattock and dance while you can.*

'O life's too short for friends who share,'
Travellers think in their hearts,
'The city's common bed, the air,
The mountain bivouac and the bathing beach,
Where incidents draw every day from each
Memorable gesture and witty speech.'
So travellers think in their hearts,
Till malice or circumstance parts
Them from their constant humour:
And slyly Death's coercive rumour
In the silence starts.
*A friend is the old old tale of Narcissus,*
*Not to be born is the best for man;*
*An active partner in something disgraceful,*
*Change your partner, dance while you can.*

'O stretch your hands across the sea,'
The impassioned lover cries,
'Stretch them towards your harm and me.
Our grass is green, and sensual our brief bed,
The stream sings at its foot, and at its head
The mild and vegetarian beasts are fed.'
So the impassioned lover cries
Till his storm of pleasure dies:
From the bedpost and the rocks
Death's enticing echo mocks,
And his voice replies.
*The greater the love, the more false to its object,*
*Not to be born is the best for man;*
*After the kiss comes the impulse to throttle,*
*Break the embraces, dance while you can.*

'I see the guilty world forgiven,'
Dreamer and drunkard sing,
'The ladders let down out of heaven,
The laurels springing from the martyrs' blood,
The children skipping where the weepers stood,
The lover's natural and the beasts all good.'
So dreamer and drunkard sing
Till day their sobriety bring:
Parrotwise with death's reply
From whelping fear and nesting lie,
Woods and their echoes ring.
*The desires of the heart are as crooked as corkscrews,*
*Not to be born is the best for man;*
*The second-best is a formal order,*
*The dance's pattern; Dance while you can.*
*Dance, dance, for the figure is easy,*
*The tune is catching and will not stop;*
*Dance till the stars come down with the rafters;*
*Dance, dance, dance till you drop.*

## *XXVII*

O who can ever praise enough
The world of his belief?
Harum-scarum childhood plays
In the meadows near his home,
In his woods love knows no wrong,
Travellers ride their placid ways,
In the cool shade of the tomb
Age's trusting footfalls ring.
O who can paint the vivid tree
And grass of phantasy?

But to create it and to guard
Shall be his whole reward:
He shall watch and he shall weep,
All his father's love deny,
To his mother's womb be lost,
Eight nights with a wanton sleep,
Then upon the ninth shall be
Bride and victim to a ghost,
And in the pit of terror thrown
Shall bear the wrath alone.

## *XXVIII*

Say this city has ten million souls,
Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes:
Yet there's no place for us, my dear, yet there's no place for us.

Once we had a country and we thought it fair,
Look in the atlas and you'll find it there:
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there now.

In the village churchyard there grows an old yew,
Every spring it blossoms anew:
Old passports can't do that, my dear, old passports can't do that.

The consul banged the table and said;
'If you've got no passport you're officially dead':
But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive.

Went to a committee; they offered me a chair;
Asked me politely to return next year:
But where shall we go to-day, my dear, but where shall we
go to-day?

Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said:
'If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread';
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of
you and me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky;
It was Hitler over Europe, saying: 'They must die';
O we were in his mind, my dear, O we were in his mind.

Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin,
Saw a door opened and a cat let in:
But they weren't German Jews, my dear, but they weren't
German Jews.

Went down the harbour and stood upon the quay,
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free:
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.

Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;
They had no politicians and sang at their ease:
They weren't the human race, my dear, they weren't the
human race.

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand floors,
A thousand windows and a thousand doors;
Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was ours

Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;
Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro:
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me.

## *XXIX*

Seen when night is silent,
The bean-shaped island
And our ugly comic servant,
Who was observant.

O the veranda and the fruit,
The tiny steamer in the bay
Startling summer with its hoot:—
You have gone away.

## *XXX*

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplane circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message He Is Dead,
Put crêpe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one:
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods:
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

## *XXXI*

That night when joy began
Our narrowest veins to flush,
We waited for the flash
Of morning's levelled gun.

But morning let us pass
And day by day relief
Outgrows his nervous laugh,
Crows credulous of peace,

As mile by mile is seen
No trespasser's reproach,
And love's best glasses reach
No fields but are his own.

## *XXXII**

*Dog* The single creature leads a partial life,
Man by his mind, and by his nose the hound;
He needs the deep emotions I can give,
I scent in him a vaster hunting ground.

*Cats* Like calls to like, to share is to relieve
And sympathy the root bears love the flower;
He feels in us, and we in him perceive
A common passion for the lonely hour.

*Cats* We move in our apartness and our pride
About the decent dwellings he has made:
*Dog* In all his walks I follow at his side,
His faithful servant and his loving shade.

## *XXXIII**

Though determined Nature can
Only offer human eyes
One alternative to sleep,
Opportunity to weep,
  Who can refuse her?
Error does not end with youth
But increases in the man;
  All truth, only truth,
Carries the ambiguous lies
  Of the Accuser.

Though some sudden fire of grace
Visit our mortality
Till a whole life tremble for
Swans upon a river or
  Some passing stranger,
Hearts by envy are possessed
From the moment that they praise;
  To rejoice, to be blessed,
Places us immediately
  In mortal danger

Though we cannot follow how
Evil miracles are done
Through the medium of a kiss,
Aphrodite's garden is
  A haunted region;
For the very signs whereby
Lovers register their vow,
  With a look, with a sigh,
Summon to their meetings One
  Whose name is Legion.

We, my darling, for our sins
Suffer in each other's woe,
Read in injured eyes and hands
How we broke divine commands
And served the Devil.
Who is passionate enough
When the punishment begins?
O my love, O my love,
In the night of fire and snow
Save me from evil.

## *XXXIV*

Underneath the abject willow,
Lover, sulk no more:
Act from thought should quickly follow.
What is thinking for?
Your unique and moping station
Proves you cold;
Stand up and fold
Your map of desolation.

Bells that toll across the meadows
From the sombre spire
Toll for these unloving,shadows
Love does not require.
All that lives may love; why longer
Bow to loss
With arms across?
Strike and you shall conquer.

Geese in flocks above you flying
Their direction know,

Brooks beneath the thin ice flowing
To their oceans go.
Dark and dull is your distraction,
Walk then, come,
No longer numb
Into your satisfaction.

## *XXXV*

(*Tune: Frankie & Johnny*)

Victor was a little baby,
Into this world he came;
His father took him on his knee and said:
'Don't dishonour the family name.'

Victor looked up at his father
Looked up with big round eyes:
His father said; 'Victor, my only son,
Don't you ever ever tell lies.'

Victor and his father went riding
Out in a little dog-cart;
His father took a Bible from his pocket and read;
'Blessed are the pure in heart.'

It was a frosty December,
It wasn't the season for fruits;
His father fell dead of heart disease
While lacing up his boots.

It was a frosty December
When into his grave he sank;
His uncle found Victor a post as cashier
In the Midland Counties Bank.

It was a frosty December
Victor was only eighteen,
But his figures were neat and his margins straight
And his cuffs were always clean.

He took a room at the Peveril,
A respectable boarding-house;
And Time watched Victor day after day
As a cat will watch a mouse.

The clerks slapped Victor on the shoulder;
'Have you ever had a woman?' they said,
'Come down town with us on Saturday night'.
Victor smiled and shook his head.

The manager sat in his office,
Smoked a Corona cigar:
Said; 'Victor's a decent fellow but
He's too mousey to go far'.

Victor went up to his bedroom,
Set the alarum bell;
Climbed into bed, took his Bible and read
Of what happened to Jezebel.

It was the First of April,
Anna to the Peveril came;
Her eyes, her lips, her breasts, her hips
And her smile set men aflame.

She looked as pure as a schoolgirl
On her First Communion day
But her kisses were like the best champagne
When she gave herself away.

It was the Second of April,
She was wearing a coat of fur;
Victor met her upon the stairs
And he fell in love with her.

The first time he made his proposal,
She laughed, said; 'I'll never wed';
The second time there was a pause;
Then she smiled and shook her head.

Anna looked into her mirror,
Pouted and gave a frown:
Said; 'Victor's as dull as a wet afternoon
But I've got to settle down.'

The third time he made his proposal,
As they walked by the Reservoir:
She gave him a kiss like a blow on the head,
Said; 'You are my heart's desire.'

They were married early in August,
She said; 'Kiss me, you funny boy':
Victor took her in his arms and said;
'O my Helen of Troy.'

It was the middle of September,
Victor came to the office one day;
He was wearing a flower in his buttonhole,
He was late but he was gay.

The clerks were talking of Anna,
The door was just ajar:
One said; 'Poor old Victor, but where ignorance
Is bliss, et cetera.'

Victor stood still as a statue,
The door was just ajar:
One said; 'God, what fun I had with her
In that Baby Austin car.'

Victor walked out into the High Street,
He walked to the edge of the town;
He came to the allotments and the rubbish heaps
And his tears came tumbling down.

Victor looked up at the sunset
As he stood there all alone;
Cried: 'Are you in Heaven, Father?'
But the sky said 'Address not known'.

Victor looked up at the mountains,
The mountains all covered with snow:
Cried; 'Are you pleased with me, Father?'
And the answer came back, No.

Victor came to the forest,
Cried: 'Father, will she ever be true?'
And the oaks and the beeches shook their heads
And they answered: 'Not to you.'

Victor came to the meadow
Where the wind went sweeping by:
Cried; 'O Father, I love her so',
But the wind said, 'She must die'.

Victor came to the river
Running so deep and so still:
Crying; 'O Father, what shall I do?'
And the river answered, 'Kill'.

Anna was sitting at a table,
Drawing cards from a pack;
Anna was sitting at table
Waiting for her husband to come back.

It wasn't the Jack of Diamonds
Nor the Joker she drew at first;
It wasn't the King or the Queen of Hearts
But the Ace of Spades reversed.

Victor stood in the doorway,
He didn't utter a word:
She said; 'What's the matter, darling?'
He behaved as if he hadn't heard.

There was a voice in his left ear,
There was a voice in his right,
There was a voice at the base of his skull
Saying, 'She must die to-night'.

Victor picked up a carving-knife,
His features were set and drawn,
Said; 'Anna, it would have been better for you
If you had not been born.'

Anna jumped up from the table,
Anna started to scream,
But Victor came slowly after her
Like a horror in a dream.

She dodged behind the sofa,
She tore down a curtain rod,
But Victor came slowly after her:
Said; 'Prepare to meet thy God.'

She managed to wrench the door open,
        She ran and she didn't stop.
But Victor followed her up the stairs
        And he caught her at the top.

He stood there above the body,
        He stood there holding the knife;
And the blood ran down the stairs and sang,
        'I'm the Resurrection and the Life'.

They tapped Victor on the shoulder,
        They took him away in a van;
He sat as quiet as a lump of moss
        Saying, 'I am the Son of Man'.

Victor sat in a corner
        Making a woman of clay:
Saying; 'I am Alpha and Omega, I shall come
        To judge the earth one day.'

## *XXXVI*

Warm are the still and lucky miles,
White shores of longing stretch away,
The light of recognition fills
  The whole great day, and bright
The tiny world of lovers' arms.

Silence invades the breathing wood
Where drowsy limbs a treasure keep,
Now greenly falls the learned shade
  Across the sleeping brows
And stirs their secret to a smile.

Restored! Returned! The lost are born
On seas of shipwreck home at last:
See! In the fire of praising burns
  The dry dumb past, and we
The life-day long shall part no more.

## *XXXVII*

What's in your mind, my dove, my coney;
Do thoughts grow like feathers, the dead end of life;
Is it making of love or counting of money,
Or raid on the jewels, the plans of a thief?

Open your eyes, my dearest dallier;
Let hunt with your hands for escaping me;
Go through the motions of exploring the familiar;
Stand on the brink of the warm white day.

Rise with the wind, my great big serpent;
Silence the birds and darken the air;
Change me with terror, alive in a moment;
Strike for the heart and have me there.

# PART FOUR



# *In Time of War*

*A Sonnet Sequence*
*with a verse commentary*

## I

So from the years the gifts were showered; each
Ran off with his at once into his life:
Bee took the politics that make a hive,
Fish swam as fish, peach settled into peach.

And were successful at the first endeavour;
The hour of birth their only time at college,
They were content with their precocious knowledge,
And knew their station and were good for ever.

Till finally there came a childish creature
On whom the years could model any feature,
And fake with ease a leopard or a dove;

Who by the lightest wind was changed and shaken,
And looked for truth and was continually mistaken,
And envied his few friends and chose his love.

## II

They wondered why the fruit had been forbidden;
It taught them nothing new. They hid their pride,
But did not listen much when they were chidden;
They knew exactly what to do outside.

They left: immediately the memory faded
Of all they'd learnt; they could not understand
The dogs now who, before, had always aided;
The stream was dumb with whom they'd always planned.

They wept and quarrelled: freedom was so wild.
In front, maturity, as he ascended,
Retired like a horizon from the child;

The dangers and the punishments grew greater;
And the way back by angels was defended
Against the poet and the legislator.

## III

Only a smell had feelings to make known,
Only an eye could point in a direction;
The fountain's utterance was itself alone;
The bird meant nothing: that was his projection

Who named it as he hunted it for food.
He felt the interest in his throat, and found
That he could send his servant to the wood,
Or kiss his bride to rapture with a sound.

They bred like locusts till they hid the green
And edges of the world: and he was abject,
And to his own creation became subject;

And shook with hate for things he'd never seen,
And knew of love without love's proper object,
And was oppressed as he had never been.

## IV

He stayed: and was imprisoned in possession.
The seasons stood like guards about his ways,
The mountains chose the mother of his children,
And like a conscience the sun ruled his days.

Beyond him his young cousins in the city
Pursued their rapid and unnatural course,
Believed in nothing but were easy-going,
And treated strangers like a favourite horse.

And he changed little,
But took his colour from the earth,
And grew in likeness to his sheep and cattle.

The townsman thought him miserly and simple,
The poet wept and saw in him the truth,
And the oppressor held him up as an example.

## V

His generous bearing was a new invention:
For life was slow; earth needed to be careless:
With horse and sword he drew the girls' attention;
He was the Rich, the Bountiful, the Fearless.

And to the young he came as a salvation;
They needed him to free them from their mothers,
And grew sharp-witted in the long migration,
And round his camp fires learnt all men are brothers.

But suddenly the earth was full: he was not wanted.
And he became the shabby and demented,
And took to drink to screw his nerves to murder;

Or sat in offices and stole,
And spoke approvingly of Law and Order,
And hated life with all his soul.

## VI

He watched the stars and noted birds in flight;
The rivers flooded or the Empire fell:
He made predictions and was sometimes right;
His lucky guesses were rewarded well.

And fell in love with Truth before he knew her,
And rode into imaginary lands,
With solitude and fasting hoped to woo her,
And mocked at those who served her with their hands.

But her he never wanted to despise,
But listened always for her voice; and when
She beckoned to him, he obeyed in meekness,

And followed her and looked into her eyes;
Saw there reflected every human weakness,
And saw himself as one of many men.

## VII

He was their servant—some say he was blind—
And moved among their faces and their things;
Their feeling gathered in him like a wind
And sang: they cried—'It is a God that sings'—

And worshipped him and set him up apart,
And made him vain, till he mistook for song
The little tremors of his mind and heart
At each domestic wrong.

Songs came no more: he had to make them.
With what precision was each strophe planned.
He hugged his sorrow like a plot of land,

And walked like an assassin through the town,
And looked at men and did not like them,
But trembled if one passed him with a frown.

## VIII

He turned his field into a meeting-place,
And grew the tolerant ironic eye,
And formed the mobile money-changer's face,
And found the notion of equality.

And strangers were as brothers to his clocks,
And with his spires he made a human sky;
Museums stored his learning like a box,
And paper watched his money like a spy.

It grew so fast his life was overgrown,
And he forgot what once it had been made for,
And gathered into crowds and was alone,

And lived expensively and did without,
And could not find the earth which he had paid for,
Nor feel the love that he knew all about.

## IX

They died and entered the closed life like nuns:
Even the very poor lost something; oppression
Was no more a fact; and the self-centred ones
Took up an even more extreme position.

And the kingly and the saintly also were
Distributed among the woods and oceans,
And touch our open sorrow everywhere,
Airs, waters, places, round our sex and reasons;

Are what we feed on as we make our choice.
We bring them back with promises to free them,
But as ourselves continually betray them:

They hear their deaths lamented in our voice,
But in our knowledge know we could restore them;
They could return to freedom; they would rejoice.

## X

As a young child the wisest could adore him;
He felt familiar to them like their wives:
The very poor saved up their pennies for him,
And martyrs brought him presents of their lives.

But who could sit and play with him all day?
Their other needs were pressing, work, and bed:
The beautiful stone courts were built where they
Could leave him to be worshipped and well fed.

But he escaped. They were too blind to tell
That it was he who came with them to labour,
And talked and grew up with them like a neighbour:

To fear and greed those courts became a centre;
The poor saw there the tyrant's citadel,
And martyrs the lost face of the tormentor.

## XI

He looked in all His wisdom from the throne
Down on the humble boy who kept the sheep,
And sent a dove; the dove returned alone:
Youth liked the music, but soon fell asleep.

But He had planned such future for the youth:
Surely His duty now was to compel;
For later he would come to love the truth,
And own his gratitude. The eagle fell.

It did not work: his conversation bored
The boy who yawned and whistled and made faces,
And wriggled free from fatherly embraces;

But with the eagle he was always willing
To go where it suggested, and adored
And learnt from it the many ways of killing.

## XII

And the aged ended, and the last deliverer died
In bed, grown idle and unhappy; they were safe:
The sudden shadow of the giant's enormous calf
Would fall no more at dusk across the lawn outside.

They slept in peace: in marshes here and there no doubt
A sterile dragon lingered to a natural death,
But in a year the spoor had vanished from the heath;
The kobold's knocking in the mountain petered out.

Only the sculptors and the poets were half sad,
And the pert retinue from the magician's house
Grumbled and went elsewhere. The vanquished powers
were glad

To be invisible and free: without remorse
Struck down the sons who strayed into their course,
And ravished the daughters, and drove the fathers mad.

## XIII

Certainly praise: let the song mount again and again
For life as it blossoms out in a jar or a face,
For the vegetable patience, the animal grace;
Some people have been happy; there have been great men.

But hear the mourning's injured weeping, and know why:
Cities and men have fallen; the will of the Unjust
Has never lost its power; still, all princes must
Employ the Fairly-Noble unifying Lie.

History opposes its grief to our buoyant song:
The Good Place has not been; our star has warmed
to birth
A race of promise that has never proved its worth;

The quick new West is false; and prodigious, but wrong
This passive flower-like people who for so long
In the Eighteen Provinces have constructed the earth.

## XIV

Yes, we are going to suffer now; the sky
Throbs like a feverish forehead; pain is real;
The groping searchlights suddenly reveal
The little natures that will make us cry,

Who never quite believed they could exist,
Not where we were. They take us by surprise
Like ugly long-forgotten memories,
And like a conscience all the guns resist.

Behind each sociable home-loving eye
The private massacres are taking place;
All Women, Jews, the Rich, the Human Race.

The mountains cannot judge us when we lie:
We dwell upon the earth; the earth obeys
The intelligent and evil till they die.

## XV

Engines bear them through the sky: they're free
And isolated like the very rich;
Remote like savants, they can only see
The breathing city as a target which

Requires their skill; will never see how flying
Is the creation of ideas they hate,
Nor how their own machines are always trying
To push through into life. They chose a fate

The islands where they live did not compel.
Though earth may teach our proper discipline,
At any time it will be possible

To turn away from freedom and become
Bound like the heiress in her mother's womb,
And helpless as the poor have always been.

## XVI

Here war is simple like a monument:
A telephone is speaking to a man;
Flags on a map assert that troops were sent;
A boy brings milk in bowls. There is a plan

For living men in terror of their lives,
Who thirst at nine who were to thirst at noon,
And can be lost and are, and miss their wives,
And, unlike an idea, can die too soon.

But ideas can be true although men die,
And we can watch a thousand faces
Made active by one lie:

And maps can really point to places
Where life is evil now:
Nanking; Dachau.

## XVII

They are and suffer; that is all they do;
A bandage hides the place where each is living,
His knowledge of the world restricted to
The treatment that the instruments are giving.

And lie apart like epochs from each other
—Truth in their sense is how much they can bear;
It is not talk like ours, but groans they smother—
And are remote as plants; we stand elsewhere.

For who when healthy can become a foot?
Even a scratch we can't recall when cured,
But are boist'rous in a moment and believe

In the common world of the uninjured, and cannot
Imagine isolation. Only happiness is shared,
And anger, and the idea of love.

## XVIII

Far from the heart of culture he was used:
Abandoned by his general and his lice,
Under a padded quilt he closed his eyes
And vanished. He will not be introduced

When this campaign is tidied into books:
No vital knowledge perished in his skull;
His jokes were stale; like wartime, he was dull;
His name is lost for ever like his looks.

He neither knew nor chose the Good, but taught us,
And added meaning like a comma, when
He turned to dust in China that our daughters

Be fit to love the earth, and not again
Disgraced before the dogs; that, where are waters,
Mountains and houses, may be also men.

## XIX

But in the evening the oppression lifted;
The peaks came into focus; it had rained:
Across the lawns and cultured flowers drifted
The conversation of the highly trained.

The gardeners watched them pass and priced their shoes:
A chauffeur waited, reading in the drive,
For them to finish their exchange of views;
It seemed a picture of the private life.

Far off, no matter what good they intended,
The armies waited for a verbal error
With all the instruments for causing pain:

And on the issue of their charm depended
A land laid waste, with all its young men slain,
The women weeping, and the towns in terror.

## XX

They carry terror with them like a purse,
And flinch from the horizon like a gun;
And all the rivers and the railways run
Away from Neighbourhood as from a curse.

They cling and huddle in the new disaster
Like children sent to school, and cry in turn;
For Space has rules they cannot hope to learn,
Time speaks a language they will never master.

We live here. We lie in the Present's unopened
Sorrow; its limits are what we are.
Ought the prisoner ever to pardon his cell,

Can future ages ever escape so far,
Yet feel derived from everything that happened,
Even from us, that even this was well?

## XXI

The life of man is never quite completed;
The daring and the chatter will go on:
But, as an artist feels his power gone,
These walk the earth and know themselves defeated.

Some could not bear nor break the young and mourn for
The wounded myths that once made nations good,
Some lost a world they never understood,
Some saw too clearly all that man was born for.

Loss is their shadow-wife, Anxiety
Receives them like a grand hotel; but where
They may regret they must; their life, to hear

The call of the forbidden cities, see
The stranger watch them with a happy stare,
And Freedom hostile in each home and tree.

## XXII

Simple like all dream wishes, they employ
The elementary language of the heart,
And speak to muscles of the need for joy;
The dying and the lovers soon to part

Hear them and have to whistle. Always new,
They mirror every change in our position;
They are our evidence of what we do;
They speak directly to our lost condition.

Think in this year what pleased the dancers best:
When Austria died and China was forsaken,
Shanghai in flames and Teruel retaken,

France put her case before the world: 'Partout
Il y de la joie'. America addressed
The earth: 'Do you love me as I love you?'

## XXIII

When all the apparatus of report
Confirms the triumph of our enemies;
Our bastion pierced, our army in retreat,
Violence successful like a new disease,

And Wrong a charmer everywhere invited;
When we regret that we were ever born:
Let us remember all who seemed deserted.
To-night in China let me think of one,

Who through ten years of silence worked and waited,
Until in Muzot all his powers spoke,
And everything was given once for all:

And with the gratitude of the Completed
He went out in the winter night to stroke
That little tower like a great animal.

## XXIV

No, not their names. It was the others who built
Each great coercive avenue and square,
Where man can only recollect and stare,
The really lonely with the sense of guilt

Who wanted to persist like that for ever;
The unloved had to leave material traces:
But these need nothing but our better faces,
And dwell in them, and know that we shall never

Remember who we are nor why we're needed.
Earth grew them as a bay grows fishermen
Or hills a shepherd; they grew ripe and seeded;

And the seeds clung to us; even our blood
Was able to revive them; and they grew again;
Happy their wish and mild to flower and flood.

## XXV

Nothing is given: we must find our law.
Great buildings jostle in the sun for domination;
Behind them stretch like sorry vegetation
The low recessive houses of the poor.

We have no destiny assigned us:
Nothing is certain but the body; we plan
To better ourselves; the hospitals alone remind us
Of the equality of man.

Children are really loved here, even by police:
They speak of years before the big were lonely,
And will be lost.

And only
The brass bands throbbing in the parks foretell
Some future reign of happiness and peace.

We learn to pity and rebel.

## XXVI

Always far from the centre of our names,
The little workshop of love: yes, but how wrong
We were about the old manors and the long
Abandoned Folly and the children's games.

Only the acquisitive expects a quaint
Unsaleable product, something to please
An artistic girl; it's the selfish who sees
In every impractical beggar a saint.

We can't believe that we ourselves designed it,
A minor item of our daring plan
That caused no trouble; we took no notice of it.

Disaster comes, and we're amazed to find it
The single project that since work began
Through all the cycle showed a steady profit.

## XXVII

Wandering lost upon the mountains of our choice,
Again and again we sigh for an ancient South,
For the warm nude ages of instinctive poise,
For the taste of joy in the innocent mouth.

Asleep in our huts, how we dream of a part
In the glorious balls of the future; each intricate maze
Has a plan, and the disciplined movements of the heart
Can follow for ever and ever its harmless ways.

We envy streams and houses that are sure:
But we are articled to error; we
Were never nude and calm like a great door,

And never will be perfect like the fountains;
We live in freedom by necessity,
A mountain people dwelling among mountains.

## *Commentary*

Season inherits legally from dying season;
Protected by the wide peace of the sun, the planets
Continue their circulations; and the galaxy

Is free for ever to revolve like an enormous biscuit:
With all his engines round him and the summer flowers,
Little upon his little earth, man contemplates

The universe of which he is both judge and victim;
A rarity in an uncommon corner, gazes
On the great trackways where his tribe and truth are nothing.

Certainly the growth of the fore-brain has been a success:
He has not got lost in a backwater like the lampshell
Or the limpet; he has not died out like the super-lizards.

His boneless worm-like ancestors would be amazed
At the upright position, the breasts, the four-chambered heart,
The clandestine evolution in the mother's shadow.

'Sweet is it', say the doomed, 'to be alive through wretched',
And the young emerging from the closed parental circle,
To whose uncertainty the certain years present

Their syllabus of limitless anxiety and labour,
At first feel nothing but the gladness of their freedom,
Are happy in the new embraces and the open talk.

But liberty to be and weep has never been sufficient;
The winds surround our griefs, the unfenced sky
To all our failures is a taciturn unsmiling witness.

And not least here, among this humorous and hairless people
Who like a cereal have inherited these valleys:
Tarin nursed them; Thibet was the tall rock of their protection

And where the Yellow River shifts its course, they learnt
How to live well, though ruin threatened often.
For centuries they looked in fear towards the northern defiles,

But now must turn and gather like a fist to strike
Wrong coming from the sea, from those whose paper houses
Tell of their origin among the coral islands;

Who even to themselves deny a human freedom,
And dwell in the estranging tyrant's vision of the earth
In a calm stupor under their blood-spotted flag.

Here danger works a civil reconciliation
Interior hatreds are resolved upon this foreign foe,
And will-power to resist is growing like a prosperous city.

For the invader now is deadly and impartial as a judge:
Down country footpaths, from each civic sky,
His anger blows alike upon the rich, and all

Who dwell within the crevices of destitution,
On those with a laborious lifetime to recall, and those,
The innocent and short whose dreams contain no children.

While in an international and undamaged quarter,
Casting our European shadows on Shanghai,
Walking unhurt among the banks, apparently immune

Below the monuments of an acquisitive society,
With friends and books and money and the traveller's freedom,
We are compelled to realize that our refuge is a sham.

For this material contest that has made Hongkew
A terror and a silence, and Chapei a howling desert,
Is but the local variant of a struggle in which all,

The elderly, the amorous, the young, the handy and
    the thoughtful,
Those to whom feeling is a science, those to whom study
Of all that can be added and compared is a consuming love,

With those whose brains are empty as a school in August,
And those in whom the urge to action is so strong
They cannot read a letter without whispering, all

In cities, deserts, ships, in lodgings near the port,
Discovering the past of strangers in a library,
Creating their own future on a bed, each with his treasure,

Self-confident among the laughter and the *petits verres*,
Or motionless and lonely like a moping cormorant,
In all their living are profoundly implicated.

This is one sector and one movement of the general war
Between the dead and the unborn, the Real and the Pretended,
Which for the creature who creates, communicates, and chooses,

The only animal aware of lack of finish,
In essence is eternal. When we emerged from holes
And blinked in the warm sunshine of the Laufen Ice Retreat,

Thinking of Nature as a close and loyal kinsman,
On every acre the opponents faced each other,
And we were far within the zone where casualties begin.

Now in a world that has no localized events,
Where not a tribe exists without its dossier,
And the machine has taught us how, to the Non-Human,

That unprogressive blind society that knows
No argument except the absolute and violent veto,
Our colours, creeds and sexes are identical,

The issue is the same. Some uniforms are new,
Some have changed sides; but the campaign continues:
Still unachieved is *Jen*, the Truly Human.

This is the epoch of the Third Great Disappointment:
The First was the collapse of that slave-owning empire
Whose yawning magistrate asked, 'What is truth?'

Upon its ruins rose the Plainly Visible Churches:
Men camped like tourists under their tremendous shadows,
United by a common sense of human failure,

Their certain knowledge only of the timeless fields
Where the Unchanging Happiness received the faithful,
And the Eternal Nightmare waited to devour the doubters.

In which a host of workers, famous and obscure,
Meaning to do no more than use their eyes,
Not knowing what they did, then sapped belief;

Put in its place a neutral dying star,
Where Justice could not visit. Self was the one city,
The cell where each must find his comfort and his pain,

The body nothing but a useful favourite machine
To go upon errands of love and to run the house,
While the mind in its study spoke with its private God.

But now that wave which already was washing the heart,
When the cruel Turk stormed the gates of Constantine's city,
When Galileo muttered to himself, '*sed movet*',

And Descartes thought, 'I am because I think',
To-day, all spent, is silently withdrawing itself:
Unhappy he or she who after it is sucked.

Never before was the Intelligence so fertile,
The Heart more stunted. The human field became
Hostile to brotherhood and feeling like a forest.

Machines devised by harmless clergymen and boys
Attracted men like magnets from the marl and clay
Into towns on the coal-measures, to a kind of freedom,

Where the abstinent with the landless drove a bitter bargain,
But sowed in the act the seeds of an experienced hatred,
Which, germinating long in tenement and gas-lit cellar,

Is choking now the aqueducts of our affection.
Knowledge of their colonial suffering has cut off
The Hundred Families like an attack of shyness;

The apprehensive rich pace up and down
Their narrow compound of success; in every body
The ways of living are disturbed; intrusive as a sill,

Fear builds enormous ranges casting shadows,
Heavy, bird-silencing, upon the outer world,
Hills that our grief sighs over like a Shelley, parting

All that we feel from all that we perceive,
Desire from Data; and the Thirteen gay Companions
Grow sullen now and quarrelsome as mountain tribes.

We wander on the earth, or err from bed to bed
In search of home, and fail, and weep for the lost ages
Before Because became As If, or rigid Certainty

The Chances Are. The base hear us, and the violent
Who long to calm our guilt with murder, and already
Have not been slow to turn our wish to their advantage.

On every side they make their brazen offer:
Now in that Catholic country with the shape of Cornwall,
Where Europe first became a term of pride,

North of the Alps where dark hair turns to blonde,
In Germany now loudest, land without a centre
Where the sad plains are like a sounding rostrum,

And on these tidy and volcanic summits near us now,
From which the Black Stream hides the Tuscarora Deep,
The voice is quieter but the more inhuman and triumphant.

By wire and wireless, in a score of bad translations,
They give their simple message to the world of man:
'*Man can have Unity if Man will give up Freedom.*

*The State is real, the Individual is wicked;*
*Violence shall synchronize your movements like a tune,*
*And Terror like a frost shall halt the flood of thinking,*

*Barrack and bivouac shall be your friendly refuge,*
*And racial pride shall tower like a public column*
*And confiscate for safety every private sorrow.*

*Leave Truth to the police and us; we know the Good;*
*We build the Perfect City time shall never alter;*
*Our Law shall guard you always like a cirque of mountains,*

*Your ignorance keep off evil like a dangerous sea;*
*You shall be consummated in the General Will,*
*Your children innocent and charming as the beasts.'*

All the great conquerors sit upon their platform,
Lending their sombre weight of practical experience:
*Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, who burnt the scholars' books,

*Chaka* the mad, who segregated the two sexes,
And *Genghis Khan*, who thought mankind should be destroyed,
And *Diocletian* the administrator, make impassioned speeches.

*Napoleon* claps who found religion useful,
And all who passed deception of the People, or who said
Like Little *Frederick*, 'I shall see that it is done'.

While many famous clerks support their programme:
*Plato* the good, despairing of the average man,
With sad misgiving signs their manifesto;

*Shang-tzu* approves their principle of Nothing Private;
The author of *The Prince* will heckle; *Hobbes* will canvass,
With generalizing *Hegel* and quiet *Bosanquet.*

And every family and every heart is tempted:
The earth debates; the Fertile Crescent argues;
Even the little towns upon the way to somewhere,

Those desert flowers the aeroplane now fertilizes,
Quarrel on this; in England far away,
Behind the high tides and the navigable estuaries;

In the Far West, in absolutely free America,
In melancholy Hungary, and clever France
Where ridicule has acted a historic rôle,

And here where the rice-grain nourishes these patient households
The ethic of the feudal citadel has impregnated,
Thousands believe, and millions are half-way to a conviction.

Nor do our leaders help; we know them now
For humbugs full of vain dexterity, invoking
A gallery of ancestors, pursuing still the mirage

Of long dead grandeurs whence the interest has absconded,
As Fahrenheit in an odd corner of great Celsius' kingdom
Might mumble of the summers measured once by him.

Yet all the same we have our faithful sworn supporters
Who never lost their faith in knowledge or in man,
But worked so eagerly that they forgot their food

And never noticed death or old age coming on,
Prepared for freedom as *Kuo Hsi* for inspiration,
Waiting it calmly like the coming of an honoured guest.

Some looked at falsehood with the candid eyes of children,
Some had a woman's ear to catch injustice,
Some took Necessity, and knew her, and she brought
forth Freedom.

Some of our dead are famous, but they would not care:
Evil is always personal and spectacular,
But goodness needs the evidence of all our lives,

And, even to exist, it must be shared as truth,
As freedom or as happiness. (For what is happiness
If not to witness joy upon the features of another?)

They did not live to be remembered specially as noble,
Like those who cultivated only cucumbers and melons
To prove that they were rich; and when we praise their names,

They shake their heads in warning, chiding us to give
Our gratitude to the Invisible College of the Humble,
Who through the ages have accomplished everything essential.

And stretch around our struggle as the normal landscape,
And mingle, fluent with our living, like the winds and waters,
The dust of all the dead that reddens every sunset;

Giving courage to confront our enemies,
Not only on the Grand Canal, or in Madrid,
Across the campus of a university city,

But aid us everywhere, that in the lover's bedroom,
The white laboratory, the school, the public meeting,
The enemies of life may be more passionately attacked.

And, if we care to listen, we can always hear them:
'*Men are not innocent as beasts and never can be,*
*Man can improve but never will himself be perfect,*

*Only the free have disposition to be truthful,*
*Only the truthful have the interest to be just,*
*Only the just possess the will-power to be free.*

*For common justice can determine private freedom,*
*As a clear sky can tempt men to astronomy,*
*Or a peninsula persuade them to be sailors.*

*You talked of Liberty, but were not just; and now*
*Your enemies have called your bluff; for in your city,*
*Only the man behind the rifle had free-will.*

*One wish is common to you both, the wish to build*
*A world united as that Europe was in which*
*The flint-faced exile wrote his three-act comedy.*

*Lament not its decay; that shell was too constricting:*
*The years of private isolation had their lesson,*
*And in the interest of intelligence were necessary.*

*Now in the clutch of crisis and the bloody hour*
*You must defeat your enemies or perish, but remember,*
*Only by those who reverence it can life be mastered;*

*Only a whole and happy conscience can stand up*
*And answer their bleak lie; among the just,*
*And only there, is Unity compatible with Freedom.'*

Night falls on China; the great arc of travelling shadow
Moves over land and ocean, altering life:
Thibet already silent, the packed Indias cooling,

Inert in the paralysis of caste. And though in Africa
The vegetation still grows fiercely like the young,
And in the cities that receive the slanting radiations.

The lucky are at work, and most still know they suffer
The dark will touch them soon: night's tiny noises
Will echo vivid in the owl's developed ear,

Vague in the anxious sentry's; and the moon look down
On battlefields and dead men lying, heaped like treasure,
On lovers ruined in a brief embrace, on ships

Where exiles watch the sea: and in the silence
The cry that streams out into the indifferent spaces,
And never stops or slackens, may be heard more clearly,

Above the everlasting murmur of the woods and rivers,
And more insistent than the lulling answer of the waltzes,
Of hum of printing presses turning forests into lies;

As now I hear it, rising round me from Shanghai,
And mingling with the distant mutter of guerrilla fighting,
The voice of Man: '*O teach us to outgrow our madness.*

*Ruffle the perfect manners of the frozen heart,*
*And once again compel it to be awkward and alive,*
*To all it suffered once a weeping witness.*

*Clear from the head the masses of impressive rubbish;*
*Rally the lost and trembling forces of the will,*
*Gather them up and let them loose upon the earth,*

*Till, as the contribution of our star, we follow*
*The clear instructions of that Justice, in the shadow*
*of Whose uplifting, loving, and constraining power*
*All human reasons do rejoice and operate.*'

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